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AN EXPLORATION OF SLOVENIAN OLDER PEOPLE'S OCCUPATIONS AND THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSITION INTO A CARE HOME ON THEIR OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Krizaj, Tanja

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**AN EXPLORATION OF SLOVENIAN OLDER PEOPLE'S
OCCUPATIONS AND THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSITION INTO
A CARE HOME ON THEIR OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

By

TANJA KRIŽAJ

A thesis submitted to the Plymouth University

In partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Health Professions

Faculty of Health and Human Sciences

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I would like to dedicate my PhD thesis to my grandparents from Trstenik who have both sadly passed away in the last year of my PhD studies.

Svoje doktorsko delo bi rada posvetila mojim starim staršem iz Trstenika, ki sta nas zapustila v zadnjem letu mojega doktorskega študija.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award.

Work submitted for this research degree at the Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree either at Plymouth University or at another establishment.

Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was often presented and one research paper published.

Publications

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ABSTRACT

An exploration of Slovenian older people's occupations and the influence of transition into a care home on their occupational engagement

Tanja Križaj

This research explored older Slovenians' occupations, including the ways in which the transition into a care home influenced their occupational engagement. The research encompassed three stages. Stage 1 investigated Slovenian older people's individual experiences of occupational engagement, with a particular emphasis on their personally meaningful occupations. Stage 2 aimed to enhance understanding of the impact of transition into a care home on older Slovenians' meaningful occupations. Finally, Stage 3 sought to provide an insight into older people's occupational engagement in one Slovenian care home.

The first two stages of this research took a phenomenological approach; focusing on the participants' individual experiences of occupational engagement; using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to approach and analyse the data. Ten older adults were interviewed in Stage 1 and six older adults were interviewed in Stage 2 at three time points: before the relocation into a care home, one month after and six months after the relocation. The final stage was ethnographic in nature; exploring occupational engagement among Slovenian care home residents as a culture-sharing group; using observations for collecting the data and analysing the resulting field notes using Thematic Analysis.

The findings consistently highlighted the significance of occupations and routines in participants' everyday lives as important parts of their identities. The first two stages highlighted the importance of a continuous experience of meaning in occupation, across participants' lives and throughout their transition into a care home. Some of these meanings were specific to Slovenian socio-cultural, historic and geographical context. The participants especially valued productive occupations such as gardening, family-related occupations such as looking after and passing knowledge to younger generations and occupations related to particular places, such as spending time at their weekend cottages and home surroundings, walking familiar pathways or hiking Slovenian mountains. These Slovenian older adults purposefully engaged in health-promoting occupations in order to maintain their health, in turn influencing their occupational engagement. Since their everyday routines were related to particular places, Stages 2 and 3 highlighted that some of these occupations were disrupted by their new living environment. The care home residents managed this situation by trying to maintain their engagement in occupations that they perceived personally meaningful and enjoyable.

This research is foundational in the Slovenian context, with the findings also being transferrable to individuals and contexts outside Slovenia. From exploring the impact of older people's living environments on their meaningful occupational engagement, the findings contribute original knowledge to occupational science regarding the link between occupation, place, identity and the transactional perspective of occupation. This indicates the need to develop further therapeutic programmes and services for older people making the transition to care home living.

POVZETEK

Dejavnosti starejših Slovencev in vpliv selitve v dom za starejše na njihovo sodelovanje v vsakdanjem življenju

Tanja Križaj

Namen raziskovalnega dela je bil raziskati dejavnosti starejših Slovencev in kako selitev v dom za starejše vpliva na njihovo sodelovanje v vsakdanjem življenju. Raziskava je zajemala tri faze. Faza 1 je vključevala skupino starostnikov in raziskala njihove individualne izkušnje vključevanja v dejavnosti, s posebnim poudarkom na njihove smiselne dejavnosti. Namen Faze 2 je bil poglobiti razumevanje vpliva selitve v dom za starejše na smiselne dejavnosti starejših Slovencev. Namen Faze 3 pa je bil prispevati vpogled v dejavnosti starejših v enem od slovenskih domov.

Prvi dve fazi sta se osredotočili na individualne izkušnje starejših Slovencev, kar je narekovalo uporabo fenomenološkega pristopa. V prvi fazi so bili izvedeni intervjuji z desetimi starostniki, medtem ko je druga faza vključevala šest starostnikov, s katerimi so bili intervjuji izvedeni trikrat: pred selitvijo v dom, 1 mesec po selitvi in 6 mesecev po selitvi v dom za starejše. Interpretativna fenomenološka analiza (IFA) je bila uporabljena za analizo pridobljenih podatkov. Zadnja faza je bila etnografska, z namenom raziskati dejavnosti skupine starejših v enem od slovenskih domov. Podatki so bili zbrani z uporabo opazovanj in zapiski analizirani s tematsko analizo.

Izsledki v vseh treh fazah so pokazali izjemno pomembnost dejavnosti in rutin v vsakdanjem življenju starejših Slovencev, kar je predstavljalo pomemben del njihove identitete. Kontinuirana prisotnost smiselnih dejavnosti se je izkazala za zelo pomembno, tako preko različnih življenjskih obdobij, kot tudi tekom selitve v dom za starejše. Nekatere od teh dejavnosti so bile močno vezane na slovenski socio-kulturni, zgodovinski in geografski kontekst. Udeleženci so se radi vključevali v produktivne dejavnosti, npr. vrtnarjenje, dejavnosti vezane na družino, npr. skrb za in prenašanje znanja na mlajše generacije in dejavnosti, vezane na določene kraje, kot so preživljanje časa v okolici doma in počitniških hiš, sprehodi po poznanih poteh in hribolazenje v slovenskih gorah. Udeleženci so se namerno vključevali v dejavnosti z namenom vzdrževanja oz. promocije zdravja, kar je posledično vplivalo na njihovo sodelovanje v vsakdanjem življenju. Glede na to, da so bile njihove vsakodnevne rutine vezane na določene kraje, sta zadnji dve fazi pokazali da so bile nekatere od teh v domu za starejše zmanjšane ali prekinjene. Stanovalci so poskušali obvladovati nastale razmere z vključevanjem v tiste dejavnosti, ki so jim predstavljale največje zadovoljstvo in smisel.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The number of older people is increasing globally, making the development of health policies and services to address these demographic changes an important political goal (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2015). The countries that gathered at the 'First World Assembly on Ageing', in Vienna in 1982, acknowledged that 'the quality of life was no less important than the longevity and that the ageing should therefore, as far as possible, be enabled to enjoy in their own families and communities, a life of fulfilment, health, security and contentment, appreciated as an integral part of society' (United Nations, 1982, p. 1186).

This research is based on the argument that engagement in meaningful occupation is vital for maintaining older people's health and well-being (Clark *et al.*, 1997, 2011; Wilcock, 1998; Mountain *et al.*, 2008; Wilcock and Hocking, 2015). It is therefore important for people to maintain engagement in such occupations for as long as possible, including throughout any transitions into new living environments. The current research aimed to explore and understand older people's experiences of engagement in occupation, including the ways in which these experiences may be affected by the transition into a care home. This chapter provides a background and rationale for this research, introducing the concept of occupation in relation to older adults and their transition into a new living environment. As the research was conducted in Slovenia, ageing and older people in that context is also outlined.

1.1 The concept of occupation

People are occupational beings, needing engagement in occupation for survival, health and well-being (Wilcock, 2007a). Engagement in occupation is also linked to people's sense of self, helping them to express and maintain their identity (Ikiugu, 2005; Carlson *et al.*, 2014). In occupational science and occupational therapy, the term 'occupation' generally refers to the things that people do in their everyday lives (Clark *et al.*, 1991), although the term's complexity has resulted in various definitions and critical discussions over the years (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT), 1997; Townsend and Polatajko, 2007; Creek, 2010; Pierce, 2014). For example, Townsend and Polatajko (2007, p. 19) defined occupation as 'an activity or set of activities that is performed with some consistency and regularity that brings structure, and is given value and meaning by individuals and a culture.' The current research focuses on older Slovenians' everyday occupational engagement, particularly their meaningful occupations. Given this, Townsend and Polatajko's (2007) definition was chosen as the most appropriate. The following paragraphs aim to analyse the ways in which occupation has been conceptualised within the occupational therapy and occupational science literature, to inform the rationale for the current research.

The conceptualisation of occupation is a primary concern of occupational therapy, with its unique focus on enabling people to engage in everyday occupations to maintain and promote their health and well-being (Law *et al.*, 1998). The need to inform and strengthen occupational therapy practice led to the development of occupational science; focused on producing new knowledge

about people as occupational beings and relationships between occupation and health (Yerxa *et al.*, 1990; Pierce, 2014). This research aims to contribute to occupational science's body of knowledge by providing new evidence in the area of older Slovenian people's engagement in occupation.

1.1.1 Idiosyncratic nature of occupation

People's experiences and meanings are subjective (Creswell, 2014), including their experiences of engagement in occupation. Individuals' perceptions and experiences of occupation are influenced by numerous contextual factors (Aguilar *et al.*, 2010), with activities that please one person frustrating another (Weinblatt *et al.*, 2000). This situation renders attempts to find a general explanation for occupation challenging and problematic. For example, several occupational therapy definitions categorise occupation as related to self-care, productivity or leisure (CAOT, 1997; Creek, 2010). This view may be limiting, however, as some occupations do not fit within any of these categories and others may fit into different categories for different people (Pierce, 2001; Hammell, 2009). For example, caring for children who are ill is neither self-care, productivity nor leisure. In similar fashion, some people may see gardening or cooking as productive while others pursue them as a form of leisure.

People's experience of meaning, while engaging in occupation, further contributes to the idiosyncratic nature of occupation (Ikiugu, 2005; Hasselkus, 2011). Life meaning is defined as 'a sense that a person has that life is worth living' (McNamee, 2007, p. 1). Although the above definition indicates a positive aspect of meaning, Hammell (2004) argues that engagement in occupation can

have positive or negative meanings for a person, with some occupations bringing fulfillment or relaxation and others causing frustration. The current research considers meaningful occupation as positive for people, fulfilling 'a goal or purpose that is personally or culturally important' (CAOT, 2002, p. 36).

The meanings attributed to a given occupation arise in different ways. Personal meanings are heavily influenced by individuals' personal dimensions, including their values and choices (Hammell, 2001). Meanings may also come from a shared community and/or culture (Hasselkus, 2011). Berman (1993) notes that meaning derives from a dynamic interplay between individuality and conformity. For example, Christmas celebrations may have a spiritual meaning to a given person, but other meanings to their relations; offering a chance to respect family traditions or connect socially with others. Occupations are therefore personally meaningful experiences, influenced by contextual factors, including individuals' 'perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions' (Pierce, 2014, p. 3). Given that every person's experiences are unique, it is important to explore individual older people's experiences of engaging in occupation and the meanings that they ascribe to these occupations.

1.1.2 Socio-cultural aspects of occupation

Individuals' socio-cultural contexts inform and influence their experiences of engaging in occupations and the meanings that they attach to these occupations (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009). As a result, older people's experiences of engaging in meaningful occupation may differ in different socio-cultural contexts (Hammell, 2014). Although occupational scientists have

acknowledged this, the literature has tended to prioritise individualistic perspectives of occupation, based on Western values (Iwama, 2006; Hammell, 2014). Although individual's experiences of occupation are unique and subjective (Hammell, 2009; Pierce, 2014), they may also be influenced by perspectives from their wider cultural group (Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt, 2008). For example, some occupational science studies found that meanings experienced during traditional occupations such as preparing food, were informed by specific cultural contexts of older adults (Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong, 2002). In a similar fashion, a Slovenian study by Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson (2002) highlighted that occupations linked to connection with others were of paramount importance in Slovenia. Although Slovenian experiences of occupational engagement vary from person to person, this aspect of connection with others may be shared by Slovenians as a cultural group. Given such diversity, Pierce (2014) suggested defining occupation at the level of both the individual and the level of shared cultural ideas. Historically, Slovenia has been influenced heavily by socialism, war, membership of the European Union, political reform and growing capitalism (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002; Setnikar-Cankar, 2006). Slovenian older people's unique history and culture may influence their values and experiences, as well as the meanings that they ascribe to their occupations. This unique perspective and socio-cultural historical context make it important to capture the experience of Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupation.

1.1.3 Occupation, health and older people

Occupational scientists postulate that all people have the right to engage in meaningful occupations which contribute to their health and well-being (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004; Wilcock and Hocking, 2015). Such rights also apply to older people who may be unable to engage in meaningful occupations for social, cultural and/or political reasons (Hammel, 2008). In 1948, the World Health Organisation defined health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (World Health Organisation, 1948). Wilcock (1998, p. 110) held a slightly different view, suggesting that health is actually 'attained through socially valued and individually meaningful occupation.' Wilcock (2006) went on to propose that, if it is to contribute to people's health, then occupation must be considered as a synthesis of 'doing', 'being', 'becoming' and 'belonging'. Whilst 'doing' and 'being' refer to the active and reflective aspects of occupation, respectively, 'becoming' refers to the ways that people change and develop as occupational beings, with 'belonging' aiming to explain people's connectedness with each other through engaging in occupation (Wilcock and Hocking, 2015). Although Wilcock's conceptualisation was critiqued in the literature, for prioritising Western values of individualism and 'doing' (Iwama, 2006; Hammell, 2014), it encourages occupational scientists to explore the concept of occupation as a prerequisite for people's health and well-being.

From an occupational perspective, people's experiences of meaning through their engagement in occupation is a key factor in promoting and maintaining health (Ikiugu and Pollard, 2015; Hemmingsson and Jonsson, 2005). Older

people's engagement in meaningful occupations has been linked to their health and well-being throughout the research literature (Clark *et al.*, 1997, 2011). For example, Lifestyle Redesign® (Clark *et al.*, 1997) investigated the effectiveness of a preventive occupational therapy programme using meaningful occupations as part of the intervention. The study indicated that engaging in personally meaningful activities led to significant improvements in the elderly participants' health, function and quality of life (Clark *et al.*, 1997, 2011). Several qualitative studies also found that older people experienced a positive sense of health and well-being when engaging in occupations that were meaningful to them (Reynolds, 2010; Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Liddle, Parkinson and Sibritt, 2013). However, circumstances may prevent older people from having the opportunity to engage in meaningful occupations.

Older people who leave their own homes to live in care homes may find that this transition affects their physical and psychological health; especially if they do not have adequate support and resources during the transition period (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008). The nursing literature uses the term 'Relocation Stress Syndrome' to refer to symptoms such as anxiety, fear, loneliness and suicidal thoughts that affect older adults who move into institutions (Walker, Cox Curry and Hogstel, 2007). In the light of previously considered links between occupational engagement and health, (Clark *et al.*, 1997; Wilcock, 2007a), these symptoms may reflect older residents' inability to continue to engage in occupations that had previously been central to their lives (McIntyre, 2013). The care home environment may support or constrain occupational engagement (Van't Leven and Jonsson, 2002). Studies have shown that older people are often deprived of the opportunity to engage in previously meaningful

occupations after they move into care homes (Mulry, 2012; Palacios-Ceña *et al.*, 2016).

Wilcock (1998) went on to develop the concept of 'occupational justice'; referring to access to 'equitable opportunity and resources to enable people's engagement in meaningful occupations' (Wilcock and Townsend, 2000, p. 85). From this perspective, older people in care homes who are not able to engage in meaningful occupations, due to institutional constraints, may experience occupational deprivation (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004). Other research notes that care home residents also sometimes engage in occupations that are not meaningful to them (Berglund, 2007; Palacios-Ceña *et al.*, 2016); resulting in 'occupational alienation' (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004). The principles of occupational science and occupational justice (Wilcock, 2007a; Townsend and Wilcock, 2004) suggest that negative experiences of occupational engagement can lead to poor health and a lack of well-being. The limited evidence that exists, about the ways that older people's move into a care home can affect their occupational engagement, indicates a generally negative impact (Hearle, Prince and Rees, 2005; Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Mulry, 2012). Slovenian literature on the topic of transitioning to and living in a care home is equally limited (Mali, 2008; Habjanič *et al.*, 2012; Bračič, 2009; Kornhauser and Mali, 2013), with no research found that focuses on residents' occupational engagement. This situation indicates the need for further research.

1.1.4 Occupation and place

The environment or 'place' in which occupations occur has a significant impact on their construed meaning (Heatwole Shank and Cutchin, 2010). In the past, occupational scientists have been criticised for discussing the concept of occupation and its context separately (Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006). The environments in which people live generate a wealth of different meanings, linked to the occupations in which they engage (Rowles, 2008). This link was confirmed by Heatwole Shank and Cutchin (2010), whose work highlighted that familiar places were an important source of meaning in occupation for older women. Such research indicates a transactional perspective on occupation, emphasising the importance of a relationship between the person and their context; centred on occupation (Cutchin, 2004; Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006). For example, older people may find their occupations meaningful because of their attachment to their living environments, including their houses or neighbourhoods. Relocating from one living environment to another may influence how people experience their meaningful occupations as a result (Leufstadius *et al.*, 2008). Such changes may arise when older people move into a care home. The meaning of 'home', and its impact on older people's engagement in occupation, has also been acknowledged in the literature (Haak *et al.*, 2007; Dahlin-Ivanoff *et al.*, 2007). Limited evidence is available, however, about the ways that care home environments can influence older people's experiences of engaging in meaningful occupation (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Cutchin, Marshall and Aldrich, 2010); with no Slovenian studies identified that focus on this topic.

1.2 Older people and ageing

Recent demographic data indicate that the world's population is ageing, with all countries experiencing growth in the number of older people (United Nations, 2015). Using chronological age to indicate the beginning of old age has been seen as overly simplistic, with some societies determining this boundary according to cultural assumptions and/or policy and legislation (McIntyre, 2013). The United Nations (United Nations, 2008, p. 3) propose that all people aged 60 or above be accorded the status of 'older persons'. Despite this, some countries including Slovenia use 65 years of age to determine the beginning of old age (Republic of Slovenia Statistical Office, 2010a). In addition to the above, researchers and service providers have started to differentiate between different groups of older people, within the old age period (McIntyre, 2013). For example, the United Kingdom Office for National Statistics (2012) distinguishes between the 'young old' (65 to 84 years old) and 'oldest old' (85+ years old), whereas in the United States of America, older people are categorised as the 'young-old' (60-74 years old), the 'old-old' (75-89 years old) and the 'oldest-old' (90+ years old) (Salthouse, 2009). Discrepancies between individuals' chronological and biological age have also been acknowledged (United Nations, 2008); challenging all of the suggested categories, and further complicating the picture.

The 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing stated that older people should be able to participate in society in order to advance their health and well-being (United Nations, 2008). This statement is echoed by the World Health Organisation's concept of 'active ageing', defined as 'the process of optimizing

opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age' (WHO, 2002, p. 12). The latter concept refers to older people's engagement in different forms of activity, at a physical, psychological and social level (Stenner, McFarquhar and Bowling, 2010), highlighting opportunities to increase societal awareness of the significance of occupation in older people's lives (Wilcock, 2007b). The current research argues that older people have the right to engage in personally meaningful occupations, promoting their health and well-being. From an occupational science and occupational justice perspective, it is therefore vitally important to understand older people's meaningful occupations and how these may be affected by significant life events, such as the transition into a care home.

1.2.1 Theories of ageing

Ageing is an inevitable and life-long process and many theories have been developed to better understand the process of healthy ageing (McIntyre, 2013). While biological ageing theories aim to explain how and why human bodies age (Kunlin, 2010), psychosocial theories investigate the potential impact of other factors such as behaviours, social and physical environments (McIntyre, 2013). In order to explore older people's engagement in occupation, three theories will now be considered; Activity Theory (Havighurst and Albrecht, 1953), the Theory of Gerotranscendence (Tornstam, 1989) and the Theory of Selective Optimization with Compensation (Baltes and Baltes, 1990).

Activity Theory was developed by Havighurst and Albrecht (1953). It states that staying physically and intellectually active are vital for successful ageing and life

satisfaction. The theory further argues that old age is a continuation of middle age and that staying active and maintaining social roles is necessary for successful adjustment to old age (Burbank, 1986). The theory arose from the results of a study by Havighurst and Albrecht (1953), conducted on 100 older adults. The findings indicated positive correlations between activity levels, attitude and adjustment scales, indicating that older adults who maintain high levels of activity adjust more successfully to old age. This theory has been critiqued in the interim, however, for imposing expectations on older people to maintain their middle-age activity levels for as long as possible (Holmes, 2006). Focusing on the benefits of activity, the theory also assumes that all people will wish to remain active, as well as failing to address barriers that prevent some older people from participating actively in their everyday lives (Holmes, 2006; McIntyre, 2013).

In contrast, Tornstam's (1989) Theory of Gerotranscendence suggests that human development is a life-long process, which continues into old age. This new perspective described ageing in terms of a shift from a materialistic and rational view of the world to a more cosmic and transcendent one, with the older person becoming less self-occupied and more selective in their choice of social and other activities (Hyse and Tornstam, 2009). This theory is sometimes compared to Disengagement Theory (Cumming and Henry, 1961), which sees old age as a time for withdrawal from activity and social roles. However, Tornstam's Gerotranscendence Theory does not include a state of withdrawal or disengagement, but rather describes a developmental pattern (Hyse and Tornstam, 2009). It highlights the importance of activities that older people choose for and initiate by themselves (Wadensten, 2003), selecting those that

are meaningful to them and ignoring forced social interactions (Meriano and Latella, 2008). Gerotranscendence Theory may help to explain both why older people value certain activities more than others and how they experience the transition to old age in terms of their occupational engagement.

The third theory, 'The Theory of Selective Optimization with Compensation' (Baltes and Baltes, 1990), states that individuals undergo a general process of adaptation throughout their lives and into later life. It posits that this process changes its dynamics in old age, however, through the action of three interacting elements (Baltes and Baltes, 1990). The authors describe an element of 'selection', with older people concentrating only on those domains of high priority to them. This may lead them to withdraw from some previous activities and/or begin to identify new life goals. The other elements are 'optimization', referring to older people's attempt to maximise their general abilities, and 'compensation' which becomes relevant when older people seek to compensate for lost abilities. The authors argue that, by using these strategies, individuals can contribute to successful ageing. The theory fits well with occupational therapy practice, referring to adaptation and compensation (McIntyre, 2013). Thus far, however, research has only examined the impact of the above elements separately, rather than exploring their potential interaction (Zacher *et al.*, 2015).

1.2.2 Older people and the transition to care home living

Older people experience various transitions in their later years, including transitions related to their health and/or a change of environment (Dapice

Wong, 2015). Although relocating to a care home refers to a move from one place of residence to another (Komatsu, Hamahata and Magilvy, 2007), the transition also entails a personal psychological adjustment, which people experience differently (Bridges, 2003). From an occupational perspective, transitions have been explored among older people undergoing the processes of retirement (Jonsson, 2011; Wiseman and Whiteford, 2009) and driving cessation (Vrkljan and Polgar, 2007). Limited evidence is available, however, about older people's engagement in occupation as they transition into care homes (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Mulry, 2012). As noted previously, older people can find the transition to care home living stressful, resulting in poor health (Walker, Cox Curry and Hogstel, 2007) and a lack of opportunities to engage in meaningful occupations and routines due to institutional constraints (Berglund, 2007; Eysers *et al.*, 2012; Palacios-Ceña *et al.*, 2016). The current research aims to contribute new knowledge about the ways in which older people experience their engagement in occupation at various time-points throughout the transition into a care home.

Institutional care for older people varies around the world, and is known by different names. In the United Kingdom, homes for older people are generally referred to as residential or nursing homes, depending on the level of care provided, although the term 'care home' has also been applied (Bradshaw, Playford and Riazi, 2012). This lack of international consistency is evident in the research literature from around the world (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Cutchin, Marshall and Aldrich, 2010; Cooney, 2011; Eysers *et al.*, 2012; Harnett, 2010). The varied terminology is particularly challenging for countries with languages other than English. In the Slovenian language, several terms are

used to refer to homes for older people (Mali, 2008). Articles published in English language highlight that authors translate these words variously into a range of different English terms (Mali, 2008; Habjanič *et al.*, 2012). For clarity, this research will use the term 'care home' throughout.

1.2.3 Older people in Slovenia

The provision of long-term care for older people has been a persistent problem in Slovenia (Albreht, 2009). After the Second World War, the number of care homes for older people in Slovenia increased, with an emphasis on institutionally-oriented care (Mali, 2010). Five percent of Slovenians aged 65+ are known to live in care homes, with the most of the remainder continuing to live in their own home environments (Mali, 2010). Only recently have new forms of care for older people started to develop, including the provision of home-based care and day care centres (Mali, 2008; Mali, 2010). The latter services are usually provided by local care homes (Mali, 2008). The funding for long-term eldercare in Slovenia comes from several sources, including compulsory health insurance, compulsory pension and disability insurance, self-paid personal contributions and local municipalities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011). In 1991, Slovenia became independent from the previous Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, leading to a reorganisation of the Slovenian welfare system. This process involved a partial privatisation of the welfare system, with the introduction of additional voluntary health insurance, so that Slovenian citizens now partially finance their own health care. The financial income of older Slovenian people, however, remains the same (Pahor and Domajnko, 2008).

In 2006, the Slovenian government adopted a strategy document entitled 'The Strategy of Care for the Elderly till 2010: Solidarity, Good Intergenerational Relations and Quality Ageing of the Population'. The strategy's stated aim was to ensure care and quality ageing for older people and to facilitate solidarity between the generations. It focused on maintaining older people's active participation in their communities, and independent living in their local environments, for as long as possible (Prevolnik Rupel, Ogorevc and Majcen, 2012). This document was unique in being developed through the cooperation of different governmental Ministries. It emphasised the importance of long-term care for older Slovenian people, including the implementation of long-term care insurance (Dernovšek and Šprah, 2009). However, adoption of the related 'Long-term Care Act and Healthcare and Health Insurance Act', introduced in 2006, has been repeatedly delayed (Prevolnik Rupel, Ogorevc and Majcen, 2012). This new legislation seeks to provide services that foster comprehensive consideration of service-users and greater de-institutionalisation, as well as promoting community care, including preventive services (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016). The provision of community services would enable older people to stay in their own homes for longer; thereby delaying or avoiding many care home moves.

There has been limited support for the development of an integrated approach to eldercare in Slovenia, with 'the voice of the elderly poorly acknowledged' (Pahor and Domajnko, 2008, p. 312). Despite this, a traditional 'medical model' of care has tended to prevail. Slovenian older adults therefore frequently decide to move into a care home as a preventive measure, due to a lack of non-

institutional care solutions (Hvalič Touzery, 2007). Slovenian care homes are social institutions, housing large numbers of residents whose behaviour is regulated by norms and rules determined by the homes' administrative structures (Hojnik-Zupanc, 1999). Currently, there are 93 care homes in Slovenia; 54 of which are state-funded and a further 39 homes are privately run with a governmental concession (Association of Social Institutions of Slovenia, 2015). On average, these homes house around 200 older residents, with the largest accommodating 860 people and the smallest, one of the private homes, housing 60 (Hvalič Touzery, 2004). In principle, the homes accommodate residents with different levels of care needs in different parts of the same building (Kerbler, 2014). Slovenian care homes therefore have floors for older people who are still fully or mostly independent and floors for people with higher levels of care needs, including people who have dementia. This feature distinguishes Slovenian care homes from some Western European care homes, where care is sometimes differentiated according to their purpose (for example residential and nursing homes) (Mali, 2008). One of the main differences from more developed European countries is that Slovenia has a limited number of small care homes and homes situated in rural areas (Habjanič *et al.*, 2012). The limited evidence that exists about Slovenian older people's care homes experiences (Mali, 2008; Habjanič *et al.*, 2012) indicates that such homes do not always pay adequate attention to individual older adults' needs (Mali, 2008), alongside other deficiencies in care (Habjanič *et al.*, 2012). No studies were identified that focused on older people's engagement in everyday occupations in Slovenian care homes.

1.3 Summary of rationale

The rationale for the current research is based on several premises. The first is that older people have the right to engage in meaningful occupations, which can influence their health and well-being. However, existing research highlights that older people's engagement in previous everyday occupations and routines is often impeded when they move into care home settings. Enabling older people to continue their meaningful occupations for as long as possible depends on understanding their occupational engagement experiences.

The second premise concerns the idiosyncratic way in which people experience occupation and meaning. Whilst this is true, people's experiences of engaging in meaningful occupations are informed by their socio-cultural context. This suggests that Slovenian older people may experience their occupational engagement differently from older people in other countries. Although older people's engagement in occupation has been explored to some extent, Slovenian literature on the topic is extremely limited. This situation indicates the need for further research to explore Slovenian older people's experiences of occupational engagement and the meanings that they attach to their occupations, based on their particular socio-cultural context.

The final premise is based on evidence that shows that the places in which people live generate meaning for them, through their engagement in occupation. Older people who relocate into care homes may therefore find that the transition influences their meaningful occupations and routines. Further research is needed to explore their occupational engagement during this

transition. Institutional care for older people, and the terminology used to refer to these institutions, varies internationally. The characteristics of Slovenian care homes are unique; given the influence of Slovenian legislation and health and social care policy. There is limited evidence about older people's experience of Slovenian care homes, with no research focused on older Slovenians' occupational engagement in care homes, or the potential impact of a care home environment on their occupations.

Therefore, the current research aims to explore Slovenian older people's engagement in occupations and the influence of transition into a care home on these occupations. It encompasses three stages, leading towards the overall aim, with each stage focusing on particular objectives. Stage 1 focuses on Slovenian older people's experiences of engagement in occupation, including their most meaningful occupations. Stage 2 aims to develop an understanding of how the transition into a care home influences their engagement in meaningful occupations. In addition, Stage 3 focuses on exploring how older people in one Slovenian care home engage in their occupations and the impact of a care home environment on those occupations. The Overall Aim of the present research, including research questions and objectives for each stage will be presented in the following section.

1.4 Overall Aim, Research Questions and Objectives

The overall aim of this research is to explore Slovenian older people's engagement in occupations and the influence of transition into a care home on these occupations.

1.4.1 Stage 1: Research Question and Objectives

Research question: How do Slovenian older people experience engagement in meaningful occupations?

Objectives:

- to explore Slovenian older people's experiences of everyday engagement in occupation.
- to explore Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupation.

1.4.2 Stage 2: Research Question and Objectives

Research question: How does the process of transition from a home environment into a care home influence Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations?

Objectives:

- to explore how Slovenian older people who decided to relocate into a care home, experience their everyday engagement in occupation.
- to explore the influence of transition into a care home on Slovenian older people's meaningful occupations over time.

1.4.3 Stage 3: Research Question and Objectives

Research question: How do older people in one Slovenian care home engage in their occupations?

Objectives:

- to explore how older people in one Slovenian care home engage in occupations.
- to explore the influence of the care home environment on Slovenian older people's occupations.

CHAPTER TWO

Philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of this research

2.1 Introduction

The phenomenon explored in the current research study is Slovenian older people's engagement in occupation, including the ways in which their transition into a care home influenced their occupational engagement. The first two stages focus on individual older people's experiences of this phenomenon. The final stage explores occupational engagement from the perspective of a group of older people living in one Slovenian care home. This chapter discusses the ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives that informed this research, in terms of their suitability to address its overall research aim. Since the content also reflects the researcher's personal worldviews, this chapter is written in the first person.

2.2 Ontological and epistemological positions

Research is shaped by researchers' differing worldviews or paradigms; reflecting their varied ways of thinking about the world (Patton, 2015). Such paradigms are based on differing assumptions about reality (ontological position) and knowledge (epistemological position) which, in turn, influence researchers' chosen research methodologies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). I believe that although reality is subjective for every individual, it is also informed by contextual factors such as their social, cultural and historical circumstances. The Austro-German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), acknowledged

the subjective nature of reality; challenging the objectivity of knowledge and suggesting that knowledge was acquired through conscious experience (Husserl, 1960). However, Husserl (1960, p. 20) proposed a so called 'phenomenological epoché', involving bracketing (setting aside) personal beliefs about the phenomenon of interest, in order to examine them purely as they presented themselves in consciousness. In contrast, Husserl's student Heidegger, reviewed the ontological question of '*being*' or '*Da-sein*', highlighting that, as humans always exist in the world, it is impossible for them to detach themselves from any given context (Heidegger, 1953, p. 49). Both Heidegger (1953) and Gadamer (1960) questioned the viability of 'bracketing'; suggesting that the phenomenon can only be fully understood through interpretation, based on people's contextual factors and previous understanding. The current research acknowledges that people's experiences of occupational engagement are subjective and are therefore obtained through human consciousness. I also believe that people's contexts always influence the ways that they interpret, and/or make sense of, their experiences. This belief led me to use interpretative phenomenology in the current research, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

This research is based on the worldview of 'constructivism', arguing that individuals construct reality through their lived experiences and interactions with their contexts; leading to multiple realities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This study's epistemological position (relating to what we know about reality) is based on subjectivism, with people's experiences and meanings being subjective, co-constructed and based on their historical and cultural perspectives (Creswell, 2014). The current research is also informed by my personal values, or so-called axiological assumptions (Creswell, 2013), which

require the use of reflexivity in order to acknowledge any previous understandings and thereby reduce potential biases (Finlay, 2011; Watt, 2007).

The current research encompassed three stages, sharing the same ontological and epistemological positions. Inductive reasoning was used throughout the research process, moving from specific cases to more abstract units of information, to deepen the understanding of a wider group within society (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013). The stages differed, however, in terms of their methodological orientations. Stage 1 and Stage 2 focused on exploring individuals' experiences and the meanings that they attributed to their occupational engagement. This led to the use of phenomenology (Finlay, 2011), both as the philosophical orientation and the chosen methodology. In contrast, Stage 3 investigated occupational engagement from the perspective of older people living in a care home, as a culture-sharing group, resulting in the use of ethnography (Patton, 2015).

Referring to the previously mentioned constructivism, Crotty (1998) differentiates between constructivism and constructionism; the former focusing on individual meaning making and the latter acknowledging the ways that people's socio-cultural contexts inform their shared meanings. People's occupational meanings can also be both personal, based on their unique values and experiences, and shared, at the level of their cultures or communities (Hasselkus, 2011). The use of phenomenology and ethnography therefore enabled the exploration of the phenomenon under study from different perspectives, providing corroborating evidence on older Slovenians' occupational engagement.

Reflexive commentary

Reading around the philosophical underpinnings of research made me wonder if a researcher is actually able to adopt a worldview which differs from the worldview that s/he believes in. It suddenly made sense why I always had an issue dealing with numbers or properly engaging in quantitative research. I have always believed in multiple realities that are unique to every individual, instead of one, objective reality. The colour and diversity of these individual realities, based on unique contextual factors, also excites me as they are never-ending and seem eternal.

2.3 Phenomenology

The first two stages of this research focus on the exploration of individual older Slovenians' experiences of engagement in meaningful occupation, including how the transition into a care home affects these experiences. Husserl suggested that conscious experience is a source of human knowledge about the phenomenon (Husserl, 1960). He is considered a founding father of a philosophical movement known as 'phenomenology' (Macann, 1993). The word 'phenomenon' comes from the Greek '*phaenesthai*' ('to show oneself', 'to appear') and phenomenology aims to 'describe the lived world of everyday experience' (Finlay, 2011, p. 10). Husserl's main point, however, was that experiences must emerge without assumptions, before reflecting on them (Dowling, 2007). In light of the above, Husserl proposed a particular attitude, which every researcher should adopt while engaging in phenomenological

research, involving 'phenomenological reduction' or 'bracketing' of one's previous knowledge and preconceptions about the phenomenon under study (Husserl, 1960; Dowling, 2007; Finlay, 2011). Therefore, Husserl's phenomenology was named descriptive phenomenology, aiming to describe the phenomenon the way it appears, without any presuppositions (Matua and Van Der Wal, 2015). The current research acknowledges the important role of human consciousness and cognitive processes in understanding the phenomenon under study, but I believe that these processes are also informed by and interpreted in relation to people's contexts.

Phenomenology, as a philosophy, has developed over time and has been influenced and revised by other philosophers such as Heidegger (1953) and Gadamer (1990). In his 1953 work, 'Being and Time', Heidegger proposed the existence of 'interpretive' or 'hermeneutic' phenomenology. He suggested that people's experiences can only be elicited through interpretation, entailing the use of a 'hermeneutic circle', as their realities are influenced by the worlds in which they live. More recent phenomenological philosophers, such as Gadamer (1990), Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Sartre (1956), have also investigated the topic of intersubjectivity and have challenged Husserl's proposition of bracketing, in support of Heidegger's perspective. However, the above philosophers have offered the ideas, while scholars and researchers over the years have been discussing and developing guidelines about how to apply these ideas into practice (Giorgi, 2006; Finlay, 2011). For example, Giorgi (2008) proposed a way to apply descriptive phenomenology to practice. He emphasised, that although idiographic aspect may be part of the data analysis process, its final aim is to describe the phenomenon in a general sense. If the

current research had used solely descriptive phenomenology, then it would have sought only to describe older adults' general experiences of occupational engagement. However, the current research aimed to explore individual older people's experiences of occupational engagement in a Slovenian socio-cultural context. I share the world-views of the previously-mentioned philosophers (Heidegger, 1953; Gadamer, 1990; Merleau-Ponty, 1962), relating to people's engagement in the world as shared and relational; indivisible from their contexts and pre-judgments. This led me to use interpretative phenomenology in order to achieve the objectives of the first two stages of the current research.

I also believe that my past experiences as an occupational therapist working with older adults make it impossible for me to 'bracket' my previous knowledge and understanding of older people's occupational engagement. Gadamer (2004) suggests that readers interpret, and thereby re-awaken the texts that they read. Although Gadamer acknowledges that readers (and by extension researchers) must be aware of the hermeneutic circle (author's sense-making), he suggests it is not about seeking the authors' 'truth', but rather about seeking how the words resonate with readers, to capture the readers' truths (Gadamer, 2004). From this perspective, researchers' previous knowledge about the phenomenon is invaluable and should be integrated into the research findings (McCance and Mcilfattrick, 2008). However, acknowledging the role of interpretation, in understanding human experiences, should not lead to phenomenological reduction's dismissal, but rather to its revision (Racher and Robinson, 2003). The role of the above 'phenomenological attitude', and the ways in which it was applied in the current research, will now be discussed.

2.3.1 Phenomenological Attitude

The first two stages of this research adopted an interpretative or hermeneutic phenomenology in order to explore Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupation. Despite this, I questioned whether 'phenomenological reduction' is possible, in principle, when using an interpretative phenomenological research approach, as people's experiences are always contextual and informed by their beliefs about the phenomenon of interest. This position imposes tensions of its own, as the adoption of a phenomenological attitude is considered a significant aspect of phenomenological research (Finlay, 2011). As noted previously, Husserl (1960) argued that this attitude entails a reduction or 'phenomenological epoché'; a 'radical and universal self-meditative process' where the philosopher 'brackets' the world of interpretation in order to see the phenomenon in its purity (Husserl, 1960, p. 21). Hermeneutic philosophers, such as Heidegger (1953) and Gadamer (2004), questioned the process of bracketing, as proposed by Husserl; emphasising instead the significance of interpretation in understanding people's lived experiences. They argued that such understanding depends on acknowledging historicity and previous understandings (Finlay, 2008). However, the bracketing process has often been misunderstood, as a way to maintain objectivity by setting researchers' subjectivity, previous theoretical knowledge and preconceptions aside (Dowling, 2004). Crotty (1996, p. 95) suggests that it should be seen, instead, as 'the experience as it is before we have thought about it'. Therefore, it is still a subjective process, acknowledging that each individual will see the world differently, but adopting the phenomenological attitude enables the

researcher to see the phenomenon before any kind of understanding or explanation is applied to it.

Continuing to look at the phenomenon in such purity throughout the research process is challenging, especially when researchers' understanding is informed by previous reading and/or experience. However, Finlay (2008) highlights this is only the case if 'bracketing' is approached from a purely Husserlian perspective. She suggests, instead, that bracketing be approached by acknowledging researchers' previous understandings in order to reflect upon them; enabling researchers to be open to participants' experiences and meanings (Finlay, 2008). The phenomenological attitude therefore requires a reflexive move where the researcher needs to disengage from their everyday experience to be able to explore the participants' experience (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Finlay (2008) compares the process of achieving a phenomenological attitude to a dance between bracketing previous understandings and being reflexive with regards to them. This proposition is compatible with the interpretative phenomenology, with Pringle, Hendry and McLafferty (2011) emphasising that reflexivity is vital if researchers are to combine and maintain Finlay's opposing positions. When I explored the individual older Slovenians' engagement in occupation, in the current research, I was open to their experiences and at the same time maintained an awareness of my own subjectivity. For example, being an occupational therapist potentially influenced the way that I perceived participants' experiences in terms of their occupational engagement. However, this earlier understanding helped me as a source of insight during the analysis process, prompting me to reflect continuously and to question both my own, and participants' interpretations.

With this in mind, I remained reflexive throughout the research process (Finlay, 2011); engaging in introspection at all times. I kept an ongoing written record of my reflections throughout the research process; capturing my immediate thoughts after events such as interviewing and data analysis (Appendix A). However, reflexivity helped me to better understand my reflections, the research process and the phenomenon under study. Although some of the reflexive commentaries were written throughout the research process, others were composed in writing up of this thesis. Several reflexive notes are included in this document to illustrate this on-going process of introspection.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the ontological and epistemological positions taken in the current research, based on the view that all individuals have their own realities and that acquired knowledge is therefore subjective. As Stages 1 and 2 of the research explored Slovenian older people's individual experiences of occupational engagement, these stages were informed by the philosophy of phenomenology. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), used as both the chosen research methodology and method, will therefore be discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 3). Finally, Stage 3 of this research focused on exploring occupational engagement amongst the residents of one Slovenian care home, as a culture-sharing group. This last stage shared the same broad ontological and epistemological underpinnings as Stages 1 and 2, but employed an ethnographic approach. The latter will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Reflexive Commentary:

When reading around bracketing and the 'phenomenological attitude', I found it really challenging and my main concern was whether I would be able to adopt it in the correct manner. However, I found Finlay's approach very helpful when she used a metaphor and compared it to dancing the tango. This dance, which has always been close to my heart, is based on improvisation instead of strictly prescribed steps. I understood her approach as moving away from your previous understandings but at the same time remaining close to them. But what does that mean and how do I do that? Being an occupational therapist, I approached this research topic with the belief that occupations positively contribute to older people's health and well-being. Furthermore, my previous experience of working with older adults enabled me to see both the positive and negative aspects of older people's experiences of transition from their home environments and their everyday lives in care homes. It was vital for me to be aware of these assumptions when looking at the data generated by the participants and to stay faithful to their meanings instead of mine. However, this also made me wonder whether it would have been possible for me to understand and embrace all the nuances of their experiences without having had my previous knowledge and understanding.

Writing my reflective diary varied in frequency and intensity, throughout the research process. For example, my reflections were most regular during data analysis, when keeping a diary helped me to think about the participants more. However, the process of reflexivity was constantly present throughout the research process. While the reflective diary was always written about things that

had already happened, reflexivity helped me to think about future events, for example how my thinking and knowledge might inform the next interview or how to best detach my thinking about a previous interview and go to the next one. For example, one participant's occupational identity was heavily informed by his life-long profession-related occupations. This could have influenced the following interviews, with me expecting other participants to also have a strong sense of professional identity. Being reflexive helped me to be aware of this possibility and enabled me to embark on the next interview with fresh eyes, waiting to learn about that particular older adult's experiences, in their specific contexts.

CHAPTER THREE

Stage 1

Slovenian older people and their meaningful occupations

3.1 Introduction

This research aimed to explore Slovenian older people's engagement in occupations and the ways in which the transition into a care home influenced their occupational engagement. The research comprised three stages, leading towards the above aim, with each stage focusing on particular objectives. The aim of Stage 1 was to explore Slovenian older people's individual experiences of occupational engagement, focusing on their most meaningful occupations. This chapter therefore provides an overview and critical discussion of the existing evidence on the topic, a discussion of the methodology and methods together with their application, findings and the discussion of findings.

3.2 Literature review – Stage 1

Each stage having particular objectives resulted in the use of different literature search terms, for each of the three stages. For clarity, the literature review for each stage is presented separately. In reviewing the existing literature, the researcher aimed to provide an insight into previous work on the topic of interest, in order to establish the context and background for the current research (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010). Reviewing the literature has been

an on-going process. The first review was conducted in 2011, and the last in November 2016; with several updates and revisions in between.

The following review is a comprehensive summary of current knowledge on the topic of interest, carried out in a systematic way. A traditional, narrative, approach was chosen; critically examining the methods and findings of existing studies in order to identify any gaps and to present an argument for further research (Jesson, Matheson and Lacey, 2011). The following databases were searched to identify research articles written in English: CINAHL, MEDLINE, AMED and SocINDEX. The search terms presented in the following table were used (Table 1) and combined by using Boolean operators. A set of inclusion and exclusion criteria were also used (Table 2) to help to elicit relevant research articles. After removing the duplicates, the database search produced 489 potentially relevant research articles written in English. After reviewing the abstracts, 21 research articles were found to meet the Stage 1 study's inclusion criteria. A further 19 papers were accessed via the reference lists of more recent articles, by personal communication with researchers with similar interests and by hand searching a range of relevant journals (Table 3). It was not possible to access articles written in Slovenian through the above databases. The above literature search was therefore repeated in the Slovenian language via COBISS (the Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services) and by hand-searching relevant Slovenian journals. This approach resulted in four additional research articles, written in Slovenian, being included in the review (Table 3).

Table 1: Stage 1 Search terms used in the database search

older people AND OR	occupation AND OR	meaning* AND	experiencc*
older adults OR elderly OR elders OR seniors	activity OR participation OR engagement		

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-reviewed research articles • English or Slovenian language • Research articles published between 2001 and 2016 • Participants aged 65 years or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles including older people with a particular condition (e.g. dementia) • Articles published in other languages

Table 3: Literature search summary

Articles in English language – identified through database search (n = 514)	Articles in English language - identified through other sources, eligible for inclusion (n = 19)	Articles in Slovenian language – identified through other sources, eligible for inclusion (n = 4)
After duplicates removed (n = 489)		
Articles eligible for inclusion (n = 21)	(n = 19)	(n = 4)
Total number of articles included: 44		

All articles were critically appraised following the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme checklist for qualitative research (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2013). This checklist enabled the author to critique the existing research evidence, in terms of its methodology, and to discuss critically its

relevance to the current research. Most of the Slovenian articles were based on undergraduate research projects, with the research process being described poorly. Due to the lack of Slovenian evidence on the above topic, however, these articles were considered seminal work in relation to older people's engagement in occupation. The decision was therefore made to include them, as long as they had been peer-reviewed and were related to the current research.

Following a review and synthesis of the above literature, this stage of the literature review has been divided into two parts. The first part discusses studies that focus on older people's experiences of engagement in everyday occupations. The second part focuses on studies that address older people's meaningful occupations.

3.2.1 Older people's engagement in everyday occupation

The first stage of this research explored Slovenian older people's experiences of engagement in everyday occupations, particularly focusing on those occupations that they found meaningful. Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson (2002) conducted the first Slovenian study to explore participants' experiences of well-being, whilst engaged in daily occupations. Although all of their 24 adult participants were under 65 years old, the findings highlighted that participants achieved a sense of well-being if they perceived their day-time occupations as balanced and meaningful. Some participants further perceived their occupations as a way to connect and contribute to their families and society. The latter may indicate the influence of Slovenian culture on occupational meaning. However,

focus groups were used for gathering the data; a method more suitable for eliciting opinions than for collecting in-depth information (Flick, 2014). Given this, the study by Piškur and colleagues would have benefitted from using in-depth interviews to explore participants' individual experiences in greater depth. As noted above, this study did not include older adults and focused only on the experiences of well-being. Despite this, this study represents seminal Slovenian research, in terms of people's engagement in occupation, and some findings may be transferrable to older Slovenians.

Other international qualitative studies which explore older people's daily occupational engagement include those by Larsson, Haglund and Hagberg, (2009), Häggbloom-Kronlöf *et al.* (2007), Wright-St Clair, Kerse and Smythe (2011). A Scandinavian study by Larsson, Haglund and Hagberg (2009), which was part of a larger study, explored the ways in which 18 people aged 85+ experienced their everyday occupations. The findings indicated the importance for participants of being occupied; even if some occupations had to be adapted and took longer than previously to perform. Participants' emphasis on the importance of engaging in familiar tasks may relate to the meaning that this 'doing' has for them. This study included only the oldest of the old, however, and participants all lived in a middle-sized industrial town. The similarity of participants' life stories, which were formed in a particular context, may also limit the results' transferability to other contexts, including Slovenia. This study did, however, indicate the importance of engaging in occupations that have individual meaning, indicating some relevance in terms of the current research.

Also focusing on the experiences of occupational engagement amongst the oldest old, a study by Häggbloom-Kronlöf *et al.* (2007) indicated that ten 99-year old Scandinavians focused more on passive, rather than active occupations, such as observing and reminiscing. This difference might reflect the fact that these participants were older than the sample from the previously-discussed study. There is evidence that difficulties in daily occupations are significantly more common amongst the 'oldest old', than amongst 'young old' adults (Andersen-Ranberg *et al.*, 1999). The findings by Häggbloom-Kronlöf *et al.* (2007) indicate that their older old participants were often restricted in their meaningful occupations by their limited functional abilities. Their dependence on other people, in terms of self-care, varied. Although the study's interview inclusion criteria specified the absence of memory and communication problems, the resulting article failed to describe clearly how researchers determined participants' eligibility; a limitation of the study. Despite this, the study participants reported valuing their everyday routines; seeing challenging occupations as an opportunity to explore and test their current occupational abilities. The transferability of these findings may be limited, however, by the study's focus on the oldest old in a specific context. The majority of the participants were also women.

There is a strong interrelation between people's daily lives and their culture (Heigl *et al.*, 2011; Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002), with the latter a fundamental factor in the meanings that people ascribe to their occupations (Iwama, 2006). The influence of culture on occupational engagement was evident in a qualitative study by Wright-St Clair, Kerse and Smythe (2011). This study, conducted in New Zealand, explored the meaning of being aged for 15

older adults. The findings highlighted that participants expressed such meanings through their everyday occupations. While challenging occupations led to a sense of being old, familiar everyday occupations concealed it. The study identified cultural differences between Maori and non-Maori participants in the sense of purpose that they experienced in their everyday occupations. While non-Maori acquired their sense of purpose through helping or caring for close family members or friends, Maori participants experienced it by being part of and contributing to a wider Maori community. Given the difference between these two cultural groups, the transferability of this study's findings to other cultural contexts may also be limited. The findings do, however, indicate the influence of a particular cultural context on older people's meaningful occupations, which is important in terms of the current research.

Following the article by Wright-St Clair, Kerse and Smythe (2011), Wright-St Clair (2012) published additional findings from the same study. The latter showed that each study participant had had an occupation that they identified as most valuable and an important part of their identity. This occupation reflected their connection to their past, their present occupational engagement and their future. These findings are significant for the current research, which focus both on older people's occupational engagement and the occupations that give their lives meaning. Wright-St Clair, Kerse and Smythe (2011) used hermeneutics and phenomenology to guide their data collection and analysis. These choices enabled participants to elaborate and reflect on their narratives in ways that may not have been possible if more structured research methods had been used. With regard to the current research, their findings also show that particular occupations have important meanings for individual older adults.

However, Wright-St Clair's (2012) primary focus was on participants' experience of being aged whereas the current research explored older people's experiences of engagement in meaningful occupation.

3.2.1.1 Identity and occupation

Relationships between individuals' identity and their occupations have also been discussed within the occupational therapy and occupational science literature (Christiansen, 1999; Kielhofner, 2008; Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt, 2008). In addition to the above, Wright-St Clair's (2012) study also showed that a person's unique identity may be expressed through engagement in particular occupations. In similar fashion, an Austrian study by Tatzer, van Nes and Jonsson (2012) found that older women's engagement in personally meaningful occupations related to keeping their identities; an important element for adapting to new circumstances in later life. The study explored the role of occupations amongst four older women from Vienna in the period of ageing, using a qualitative life-story method. The method concentrated on the women's engagement in occupations throughout their lives. This is a different focus to that taken in the current study. Furthermore, only women were included by Tatzer and colleagues and men and women may experience occupation differently (McHugh, 2016). The Austrian study's findings did, however, highlight the importance of engagement in meaningful occupations for older people, supporting the need for further research in this area.

Also using a narrative approach, Howie, Coulter and Feldman (2004) retrospectively explored how engagement in creative occupations had

contributed to the development and maintenance of occupational identity in six older Australians. The research process was clearly described and the findings showed that participants expressed their awareness of self through their engagement in creative occupations. They perceived their identity as a continuum; reflecting on their introduction to their favoured crafts in early childhood, maintaining their interest in it as adults into their retirement years. Although the aim of Howie and colleagues' study different from that of the current research, the methods used enabled participants to trace back to the beginnings of their engagement in creative occupations. As such, the Australian study contributed significant insights for the current research, highlighting the importance of continuous occupational engagement in enabling older people to maintain their identities.

3.2.1.2 Temporal aspects of occupation

The temporal aspect of occupation is important in understanding occupations' influence on health (Hocking, 2009). Several studies have focused on older people's time-use in their everyday lives (Björklund *et al.*, 2014; Chilvers, Corr and Singlehurst, 2010; Nilsson, Blanchard and Wicks, 2013). In an initial study by Chilvers, Corr and Singlehurst (2010), 90 older people, aged between 60 and 85 years, recorded the ways in which they used their time, in a 24-hour period, by completing time-use diaries. They categorised their main activities using headings from the National Time-Use Survey and recorded the reason for engaging in a particular activity as 'necessary', 'enjoyable', 'personal' or 'mixed'. The latter terms replaced the more common occupational therapy categories of 'self-care', 'productivity' and 'leisure' after pilot study participants found them

confusing. Although the statistical analysis indicated that activities categorised as 'necessary' dominated participants' daily lives (taking up 62% of their days), the results changed once the time dedicated to sleep (34% of the day) was omitted. Once sleep was removed, this sample of older people proved to engage mostly in enjoyable activities (42% of their days), with only 16% of their time being dedicated to personal care activities. This result was probably due to the fact that most of the study participants were retired and no longer involved in paid work. The categorisation process used in this study may have had limitations, as it left participants free to interpret the given categories in their own ways. Most of the participants in this study were women (n=65, 68%); their gender potentially influencing the time accorded to different occupations (McHugh, 2016). Furthermore, the research methods used by Chilvers and colleagues gave participants no opportunity to elaborate upon their experiences of spending their time, as the main focus was on their allocation of time to different activities. Despite these limitations, this study provided a valuable insight into older people's daily occupations. Although the transferability of Chilvers and colleagues' findings may be limited by the fact that their participants were from the UK, they remain relevant to the current research, which aimed to explore and understand older Slovenians' experience of occupational engagement.

Other researchers have also identified the influence of socio-cultural factors on the temporal ordering of occupations. A Swedish study by Björklund *et al.* (2014) explored daily activity patterns in 151 older adults. The data was collected from pre-structured time diaries, which were then analysed using computer software VISUAL-TimePAcTS (Ellegård and Vrotsou, 2006). The

Swedish study's findings relate to the current research in that they provide an overview of the temporal aspects of older people's daily routines and indicate the locations, frequency and duration of the activities undertaken. The findings also show that the temporal order of daytime occupations may be influenced by their socio-cultural context (socio-temporality), but night time activities are more influenced by individuals' biological needs (bio-temporality). Most of the participants in this Swedish study were women (66%) and most were urban-dwelling (59%); factors which could also have influenced the findings. It could also be argued that, when exploring a phenomenon such as occupational engagement, it is important to elicit individual's experiences; a challenge when using quantitative methodologies (Sullivan, 2001).

A less structured data collection method was used by Nilsson, Blanchard and Wicks (2013). Their study invited 19 older adults from Sweden to describe their daily engagement in occupations using time-geographic open diaries (Ellegård, 1999). This approach enabled participants to include as much detail as they wanted about their daily occupational engagement. This level of detail had not been available in the previously mentioned studies (Björklund *et al.*, 2014; Chilvers *et al.*, 2010), in which the occupational categories had been predetermined. Nilson and colleagues used a computer software summarising the nature, duration and location of each individual's time use. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Statistics, 2011) software was then used to describe participants' occupational engagement at group level. The study findings highlighted several differences between participants, in terms of the number and variety of the occupations in which they engaged. Although the authors concluded that participants spent most of their days doing 'meaningful

things', the meanings attached to their occupations need further exploration using data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, to enable in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and meanings (Patton, 2015). Despite this limitation, the study did highlight the individual nature of occupational engagement; an important finding in terms of the current study.

3.2.1.3 Areas of occupation

The occupational therapy categorisation of occupation into 'self-care', 'productivity' and 'leisure' (Townsend and Polatajko, 2007; Creek, 2003) can be limiting as some personally meaningful occupations do not fit well into these three categories (Hammel, 2009; Pierce, 2001). Despite this, several studies have explored older people's experiences of engaging in one particular occupational area, such as leisure or productivity (Ball *et al.*, 2007; Sellar and Boshoff, 2006; Knight *et al.*, 2007; Stevens-Ratchford, 2011). There is growing research interest in older people's leisure occupations, considering their benefits for health and well-being and potential importance as part of active ageing (Hagan Hennessy, Means and Burholt, 2014). A Slovenian study by Petrič and Zupančič (2012) explored 243 older adults engagement in leisure occupations. An 'Activity' questionnaire was used to collect the study data. This indicated the number of activities in which participants had engaged, over the previous year, in relation to their age, gender, marital status and education (Petrič and Zupančič, 2012). More than 90 % of participants reported engaging in social activities, with family and friends, in physical work and in mental activities; with more men undertaking physical work and more women noting activities related to religion. Using technology was participants' least reported

activity, with lower educational levels and higher age being related to less active lifestyles. Although the study provided valuable data, with regards to Slovenian older people's engagement in leisure occupations, most participants were female (76.5%) and the results were limited to the reported frequency of particular leisure activities only. Further research is needed, in Slovenia and elsewhere, using qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of older people's individual experiences of a range of occupations beyond leisure.

The five older adults in a small Australian qualitative study by Sellar and Boshoff (2006) perceived leisure as free from the 'necessaries'; imposed by work-related occupations, housekeeping and family or social engagements. This study was part of a larger piece of research, with logistical constraints leading to the small sample size. Sellar and Boshoff's (2006) participants perceived leisure as free from an internal sense of obligation resulting from their personal expectations, values and beliefs. All five participants were women, living in an urban environment, which may limit the finding's transferability to other contexts. The findings could also have been influenced by variations in the ways that participants conceptualised leisure (Sellar and Boshoff, 2006). The findings do, however, relate to the current research because they highlight leisure occupations as significant for older people's health and wellbeing.

The importance of culture, within leisure activities, was highlighted in a phenomenological study conducted by Pereira and Stagnitti (2008). This study interviewed ten older Australian Italians, all members of an Italian social club, to explore their experiences and the meanings of leisure. The participants perceived their leisure activities benefitting their health and potentially

prolonging their lives. Although individual group members pursued a variety of occupations in their own time and in the club, most of them particularly enjoyed “Bocce” (bowls); an Italian leisure tradition. The cultural significance of this particular occupation might have been heightened by the fact that all participants were Italians living in Australia. Participants’ membership of an Italian social club might also have influenced the findings. Despite these considerations, this study highlights the influence of culture on older people’s meaningful occupations; of relevance in the context of the current research. Although Pereira and Stagnitti (2008) clearly described their research methods, the data analysis process could have been explained in more depth, especially as four of the study interviews were conducted in Italian. Research suggests that concepts may be understood differently, in different languages, (van Nes *et al.*, 2010) making a clear description of the data management process in this study all the more important.

A British study by Ball *et al.* (2007) also explored engagement in leisure occupations, this time amongst 70 older adults, using structured interviews and time-use diaries. The participants were a convenience sample recruited by first year occupational therapy students. The findings highlighted that study participants had engaged in a 189 different leisure occupations, which they had to categorise into ‘active leisure’, ‘passive leisure’, ‘social leisure’, ‘hobbies and interests’ and ‘additional occupations’. Although the study had been approved by the students’ university ethics committee, there were several limitations. Firstly, the interviews were conducted by several interviewers, potentially influencing the accuracy of the interview transcripts. Secondly, participants’ responses were written verbatim, rather than being audio-recorded; potentially

limiting the depth and credibility of the qualitative analysis. Lastly, the researchers' data analysis process was not clearly described. While it was clear that the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Statistics, 2011) had been used to identify the frequency of participants' engagement in particular occupations and the nature of gender differences in the data, the qualitative analysis methods, used to devise the final data categories, remained unclear. For example, some occupations could easily have fallen into two data categories (Bambrick and Bonder, 2005). Researchers' less than transparent explanation of their data analysis process led to their findings being less than thoroughly discussed. Although this English study provides some insight into the range of older people's leisure occupations, the credibility of the findings remains questionable and limited.

Related to the above study, Knight *et al.* (2007) explored engagement in productive occupations in the same sample of older adults. Although the limitations, in terms of data collection and analysis remain, in this second study, the findings give some insight into the roles and occupations that participants perceived as 'work'. The most frequently cited 'work' roles were those of 'homemaker', 'volunteer' and 'carer'; participants identifying 'altruism' and 'pleasure' as their most common motivators for engaging in these occupations. This relatively large study (Ball *et al.*, 2007; Knight *et al.*, 2007) would have benefitted from a more rigorous qualitative research process and a phenomenological approach (Finlay, 2011); enabling a deeper exploration and greater understanding of individuals' experiences of engagement in leisure and productive occupations. These two studies are relevant for the current research,

in as much as they show that both leisure and productive occupations can be important for older people's everyday occupational engagement.

Older people's characterisations of productivity and the meanings attached to productive occupations were explored in a qualitative study by Bambrick and Bonder (2005). The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 26 older adults; based on the Role Change Assessment (Jackoway *et al.*, 1987). The productive occupations reported were then categorised and analysed using an approach reported by Herzog and House (1991). Although the data analysis was conducted by two researchers, increasing the credibility of the findings, the use of predetermined definitions may have limited the exploration of individuals' experiences and meanings (Brooks *et al.*, 2015). Despite these potential limitations, the findings revealed that participants perceived productive occupations as important to their identities. Being productive gave them the sense that they were still engaged with and contributing to their communities. Similar conclusions were drawn in a study by Reynolds, Farrow and Blank (2012), where 31 older adults reported subjective benefits from continuing being engaged in paid or self-employment. These participants reported that their work enabled them to maintain their health and to continue their personal development into later life. Some also noted the income benefits of working, especially if they were still providing financial support to family members. Participants' age range was considerable in this study (65- 91 years). There is evidence that individuals' occupational engagement experiences may differ between age groups (Weinblatt, Ziv and Avrech-Bar, 2000). Bambrick and Bonder (2005) further acknowledge that the same benefits may not be experienced by older people who have to continue in work for reasons other

than their own preference. However, these study findings indicate relevance for the current research focus on older people's experiences of occupational engagement, with particular interest in those occupations that they see as meaningful.

Some older people may decide to work for other than economic reasons (Bambrick and Bonder, 2005). This situation can lead to difficulty distinguishing between 'productivity' and 'leisure' occupations, given that occupations potentially have different meanings for different people (Hammell, 2009). Nesteruk and Price (2011) interviewed 40 retired American women to determine their attitudes towards volunteering. This grounded theory study's precise aims were not defined clearly, in the resulting article, leading to difficulties interpreting the study findings. Despite this limitation, the study's data analysis highlighted that more than half of the female participants were active volunteers within their local communities. The remaining women perceived volunteering as insufficiently stimulating or were engaged in looking after their families, despite their feelings that the latter role was not appreciated less than other civic activities. Those who volunteered experienced this occupation as positive, enabling them to maintain their social connections and to contribute to their communities. The data analysis process was conducted by two researchers, one of whom analysed the study transcripts by hand whilst the other used a computer software. Although peer debriefing was used throughout, these different coding methods may have influenced the study findings. The absence of detail on the theoretical sampling approach, used in this study, is a limitation. Moreover, the study sample included only women and some participants were less than 65 years old. Despite this, the study did show that productive

occupations, beyond paid work, can represent an important part of older adults' everyday lives. In similar fashion, a group of Irish older adults perceived social activism to be of paramount importance (Fox and Quinn, 2012). This latter, phenomenological, study involved seven participants who had taken part in a 'Medical Card' protest, to explore the meaning and value that they gave to social activism. The research process was clearly described, in the resulting publication; the findings revealing that participants' social activism had developed throughout the lives, as an integral part of their identities. In a similar way to Nesteruk and Price's (2011) American volunteers, social activism enabled Fox and Quinn's (2012) participants to improve their communities and make a difference; giving them a sense of purpose and meaning. Although the aim of this study differed from the current research, it provided a significant insight into older people's meaningful occupations.

3.2.2 Older people, occupation and meaning

The current research is based on the occupational science, suggesting that engagement in meaningful occupations influences people's health and well-being (Hammel, 2008; Hocking and Wilcock, 2015; Clark *et al.*, 1997). The link between meaningful occupations and older people's health and well-being was confirmed in an American randomized controlled trial conducted by Clark *et al.* (1997). The 'Well Elderly Study' (1997) set out to evaluate the effectiveness of a preventive occupational therapy treatment program called 'Lifestyle Redesign®' in its 361 independent-living older adult participants. Study participants were assigned to one of three groups. One group received the above preventive occupational therapy program. A second, control, group received a social group

program. The third group received no study input. After nine months of treatment, the group in which participants had engaged in personally meaningful occupations, with the help of an occupational therapist, were found to have improved significantly across varied health, function and quality of life domains. The second, social, group proved no more effective than the third, non-treatment, group. The stance taken, in not providing the third group with treatment may also be ethically questionable. The occupational therapy program group differed from the other two in that the participants were involved in health-promoting, personally meaningful activities. A second trial (Clark *et al.*, 2011) followed a few years later, which recruited a more ethnically diverse and larger sample of older adults (n=460) living in a wide range of community settings. The 'Well Elderly 2' study did not include a social control group, as the earlier trial had indicated no significant difference between the social activity and non-treatment control groups. The findings of the second study further supported the effectiveness of a healthy lifestyle program for older people. In both trials, the intervention provided was shown to be cost-effective. Although the aims of the 'Lifestyle Redesign®' studies differed from those of the current study, they are considered seminal research, indicating that meaningful occupation has powerful, long-lasting, therapeutic benefits for older people's health and well-being.

Although the above study has been acknowledged as one of the most robust health promotion studies conducted to date (Mountain, 2008), its results may be limited to the American context. This possibility led Mountain *et al.* (2008) to conduct a feasibility study to investigate whether a similar health-promoting program, 'Lifestyle Matters', could be implemented in the UK. The study

included twenty-eight older adults; divided into two groups of participants who received the same intervention as those delivered in the Clark *et al.* (1997) study. Unfortunately two participants dropped out at an early stage due to ill health. Although scores for both physical and mental health improved post-intervention, these improvements were not statistically significant. Post-intervention interviews, however, confirmed that the older adults in the English study benefitted from the 'Lifestyle Matters' preventative occupation-based program (Mountain *et al.*, 2008). Mountain and colleagues' small sample size led to the call for more rigorous research, with a formal control group, to test further the 'Lifestyle Matters' program's potential in the UK. This led to a randomised trial being proposed by Sprange *et al.* (2013) which would seek to determine the clinical and cost-effectiveness of the 'Lifestyle Matters' intervention in British older people.

Alongside exploring the link between engagement in meaningful occupations and older people's health (Clark *et al.*, 1997, 2011; Wilcock and Hocking, 2015), it is important to understand those occupations that older people find meaningful and their experiences of engagement in these occupations. Following their analysis of the historical and contemporary literature, Reed, Smythe and Hocking (2013) concluded that the meaning of occupation has changed over time and is deeply rooted in societal structure, values and politics.

The first stage of the current research focuses not only on Slovenian older people's experiences of occupational engagement in general, but also explores the occupations that are meaningful to them in their specific socio-cultural and political context. A study by Hedvig Legarth, Ryan and Avlund (2005)

investigated the occupations that were meaningful to 748 older adults in Denmark. They used the term 'most important activity' instead of 'meaningful occupations' to help participants understand the latter concept. The researchers based their study questionnaire on Leontjev's (1977) 'Activity Theory'; classifying 'important activities' according to their type, their site and their social nature. Physical activities were reported as the most important for this group of older Danes. However, the researchers acknowledged that this result could be due to the availability of public health promotion information in Denmark (Hedvig Legarth, Ryan and Avlund, 2005). Most participants also valued solitary occupations more highly than social ones; a result also noted in a previously discussed study (Nilsson, Blanchard and Wicks, 2013). This finding could be due to participants' perception that social engagement is not an 'occupation'. Participants' reasons for engaging in their 'most important' activities related to enjoyment and feeling useful. As all of Hedvig Legarth and colleagues' participants came from the same area of Denmark, these findings may be context-specific and not transferrable to older populations in other parts of Denmark or in other countries. Differences between participants' levels of functional abilities may also have influenced the results (Hedvig Legarth, Ryan and Avlund, 2005). Despite these limitations, the Danish study has some relevance for the current study's exploration of Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations. The Slovenian socio-cultural context may also influence participants' experiences of occupational engagement and the meanings they attach to particular occupations.

Slovenian literature relating to older people's occupational engagement is mostly limited to undergraduate research projects (Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat,

2013; Lebar *et al.*, 2014); potentially influencing the credibility of these studies' findings. As Slovenian literature on this topic is limited, the decision was made to include papers published in peer-reviewed Slovenian journals. During the initial literature search, only one such article was identified (Mavrič and Marušič, 2004). This study explored the occupations described as meaningful by older Slovenians living in two different environments. This study collected data from semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 older adults who were living in a care home and 20 others who were living at home. Whilst the activities that participants described as meaningful were sorted into three occupational areas (activities of daily living, leisure and work), no conclusions were reached. The study's data collection and sampling methods were poorly described, in the published article, with no description of the data analysis process; making the findings' trustworthiness questionable. This study was the first to explore its chosen area in Slovenia, supporting the need for further research.

Two further relevant Slovenian papers, based on the undergraduate research projects, were also identified (Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013; Lebar *et al.*, 2014); perhaps reflecting an attempt to incorporate occupational science perspectives into the Slovenian undergraduate occupational therapy curriculum. A study by Lebar *et al.* (2014) explored gardening as a vehicle for intergenerational cooperation between Slovenian older adults and students. Although this study focused on intergenerational cooperation, the findings also showed that participants associated gardening with health and with a healthy lifestyle linked to growing their own vegetables. Furthermore, participants reported that gardening had enabled them to stay productive and to connect with others, in particular their family and friends. In a second study, Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat

(2013) found that baking a traditional walnut-roll 'potica' was seen as an integral part of special family occasions by the three older Slovenian women. Experiences of baking 'potica' were explored amongst women as they took part in a traditional annual 'potica' festival, alongside secondary school children. The study highlighted the occupational significance of tradition; the participants seeing baking 'potica' as part of their national identity, a significant connection to the past and a part of their regular routine during holidays and special family gatherings. Although the researchers collected data from both older women and school children, this article presented only the findings relating to the older women. Given that these two Slovenian studies are based on undergraduate research projects, where the emphasis is on learning and applying research skills rather than making a significant contribution to knowledge, their findings should be considered with caution. Furthermore, both of these studies focused on intergenerational cooperation through engagement in a particular occupation. Their findings indicate the need for further research in this area and the significance of Slovenian culture and tradition for older people's attachment of meaning in their chosen occupations.

The significance of culture and tradition was also identified in other international studies such as the multi-site research project exploring older women's engagement in food-related occupations conducted by Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong (2002) and Shordike and Pierce (2005). The first study used a qualitative approach to explore the subjective experiences of older New Zealand and Thai women's engagement in cooking and recipe work (Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong 2002). This study focused on the extent to which the meaning of engaging in food-centred occupations around Christmas

and Songkran (the traditional New Year celebration in Thailand) might be similar, despite cultural differences. Focus groups were used to gather the study data and the questions used to guide the interviews conducted were developed in collaboration with the New Zealand and Thai researchers. The findings revealed differences in the meaning of the two traditions explored, with the Thai participants being more traditional than the women from New Zealand. Some similarities were also identified, for example self-pride based on the standing amongst their peers that participants acquired from talking about recipes etc. One limitation of the study could be the fact that the Thai interviews were translated into English; potentially influencing the interpretation of the findings. The researchers used back translation of the questions posed, and of sections of the Thai interview data, to try to minimise any resulting limitations. The second international study exploring older women's experiences of engaging in food-related occupations was conducted in Kentucky, USA (Shordike and Pierce, 2005). This study used three focus groups, with a total of 23 older women, focusing on food-related occupations around Christmas. The findings highlighted the significance of these occupations, which participants associated with family gatherings at Christmas time. Some of this study's findings concur with those of previous studies (Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013; Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong, 2002), although they also reflect the experiences of a specific socio-cultural group of women. This multi-site study research project is considered significantly important in the context of the current research, however, as it acknowledges the influence of culture on the meaning of occupation.

The influence of factors such as culture, history and religion on food-related occupations was further confirmed in a study with 20 older Canadian women conducted by O'Sullivan, Hocking and Wright-St. Clair (2008). Although the researchers' choice of focus groups to collect the study data may have limited their ability to explore participants' meanings, it may also have facilitated the discussion by exposing participants to others' opinions and experiences (Flick, 2010). Some of the findings by Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat (2013), exploring Slovenian older women's experiences of baking a traditional Slovenian walnut roll, were similar to the Canadian study's findings. Further research is needed in Slovenia and further afield, however, as there is limited existing research on the extent to which culture influences the meaning that older people attach to their occupations.

The occupational therapy and occupational science literature have also explored engagement in meaningful occupations to better understand its therapeutic value as an occupational therapy intervention. A study by Bedding and Sadlo (2008), explored six British older adults' experiences of painting as members of a community-based art class. The findings indicated positive influences on participants' sense of well-being, enjoyment, learning and social contacts; reinforcing the value of meaningful occupation for successful, healthy aging. Although the research process was clearly described in this study and was relevant to its aim, the study was conducted in a specific cultural context which may limit the transferability of the findings. A qualitative, grounded theory study by Liddle, Parkinson and Sibbritt (2013) also found benefits for its Australian participants from engaging in art and craft activities. This study's data were gathered from two different sources. The first was a survey that was part

of a larger 20 year longitudinal study investigating health and well-being among older women. This survey identified 114 women who reported engaging in art and craft activities. The second data source came from in-depth telephone interviews conducted with a purposefully selected sample of 23 of these women. In similar fashion to the findings of Bedding and Sadlo (2008), this study showed that engaging in art and craft activities fostered feelings of joy, connection with others, self-development through learning new skills and a sense of contributing to society. A conceptual model resulted, although there were some limitations with regards to the grounded theory approach used. For example, theoretical sampling was not possible since participants were selected in advance from the existing longitudinal survey. The researchers' analysis of two different data sources may also have influenced the study findings. Furthermore, the fact that the interviews were conducted by telephone may also have limited the researchers' ability to capture any non-verbal aspects of participants' responses. Finally, there was no information about the cultural background of those who took part, potentially limiting the findings in terms of any links between the art and craft activities undertaken and participants' cultural backgrounds.

This existence of such a link was confirmed by a Greek study conducted by Tzanidaki and Reynolds (2011) which explored the meanings of traditional art and craftwork for 12 older Cretan women. The study, which used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), found that this meaning was embedded in participants' sense of and respect for Cretan tradition. Making traditional arts and crafts offered personal, social and spiritual satisfactions and frequently provided participants with a means of coping with the challenges of old age.

The study has some potential limitations as only women participated and the translation of the transcripts may have influenced the interpretation of the data, as meanings can sometimes be lost in translation (van Nes *et al.*, 2010). The latter was acknowledged by the researchers, who indicated the need to pay more attention to the use of language, as suggested by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009); IPA's developers. The study indicated the importance of tradition, in attaching meaning to occupations, which is of relevance to the current research. A further, phenomenological study by Reynolds (2010) focused on the subjective experiences and meanings of making contemporary artwork for 32 older women. This study's findings highlighted that participants perceived such occupations improving their mental health and their connections with their contexts, including their family, friends and wider society. This study also focused on women only, although other studies have shown differences between the subjective experience of well-being in women and men (McHugh, 2016). Reynolds's (2010) sample was large, considering that IPA was used to analyse the study data. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) noted that IPA study samples are usually small and the analysis detailed, in order to address the idiographic aspect of individual participants' experiences. This method did, however, enable the elicitation of participants' subjective experiences and the meanings that they attached to their engagement in art-making; important findings in the context of the current study.

Engagement in music-related occupations was reported as beneficial in an Australian qualitative study by Hays (2005), exploring the importance and meaning of music for 38 older adults. This study used in-depth interviews and focus groups to gather the required data. However, the data collection and

analysis processes lacked detail, in the resulting publication. For example, no information was provided about the ways in which the focus groups were conducted. The sample also included participants of widely differing ages (60-98 years). Some of those who took part had no musical training, whilst others were professional musicians. Despite this disparity, no major differences were found by reason of participants' musicianship; a surprising result given that the professional musicians continued to engage regularly in music-related activities. Participants described different ways of engaging with music, for example listening to music, making music or undertaking music administration. Their views of music were individual, with meanings that related to perceptions of identity, self-expression and personal well-being. Hays (2005) generalised the findings to older people in general. This is not the purpose of qualitative research, which aims, instead, to provide rich data on a particular topic (Patton, 2015).

In contrast to the above, a study by Carr (2006) focused specifically on the experiences and meanings of playing a musical instrument among seven older musicians who were still actively involved in music-making. 'The Long Interview' method, a form of a semi-structured interview, was used for data collection (McCracken, 1988). Although Carr's research question was not clearly defined, it was evident from the provided interview questions that the interview also focused on the ways in which participants' engagement in music had evolved during their lives. The findings highlighted that music was related closely to participants' childhoods and to family support at that time. Participants also linked their musical engagement to their quality of life; seeing it as a therapeutic activity which enabled them to cope with life's everyday challenges and to stay

connected with others. This study also had some limitations. For example, the study's research aim and question were defined inconsistently, making it challenging to reading through the study findings. The study did, however, provide an important insight into older adults' subjective experiences of engagement in meaningful occupation; of relevance to the current study.

Older adults have been seen as being less engaged in using new technology (Anderson, Hanson and Magnusson, 2002). A study by Aguilar, Boerema and Harrison (2010), however, found that computer use was perceived as valued and meaningful by nine older Australians. This study explored the meaning of computer using two on-line focus groups to collect the required data. IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) was used for data analysis. These participants perceived computer use as challenging but rewarding in later life. It enabled them to maintain and develop relationships. Their new knowledge enhanced both their self-esteem and their confidence. Aguilar and colleagues' use of on-line focus groups was not the most appropriate data collection method to explore individual meanings. This study would have benefitted from the use of a different data collection method, such as in-depth interviews (Flick, 2010). Such interviews were used in a qualitative study by Larsson, Larsson-Lund and Nilsson (2013), exploring internet-based activities amongst ten older people from Sweden. The study findings revealed that not all of the study participants were daily computer users. This made the study's aim hard to accomplish, as some participants were unable to share their internet-usage experiences; focusing instead on issues related to their non-usage. The study findings did, however, show that participants who engaged in internet-based activities perceived them as meaningful; enhancing their communication,

enabling their contribution to society and supporting them to perform their desired tasks and activities differently. In contrast, those participants who did not use the internet felt that their engagement in some activities was limited by societal expectations about universal computer usage. Although the transferability of the findings to other contexts may be limited, this study contributed a valuable insight, showing that older people can find meaning in internet-based activities.

The concept of active ageing has been widely acknowledged (WHO, 2002); linking physical activity to the maintenance of health and independence (Arbesman and Lieberman, 2012). A longitudinal, phenomenological study by Janssen and Stube (2014) explored 15 older Americans' views about participating in such activity. The fact that participants' physical activity levels varied may have influenced the study findings. Janssen and Stube collected their data by interviewing and observing their participants but the methods used to analyse these two forms of data is unclear. The findings showed that all 15 participants wanted to be physically active throughout their lives; noting that experiencing meaning in their chosen physical activity was vital to sustaining their active engagement. These results are significant in terms of the current research, which focused on older people's experiences of engagement in meaningful occupations.

The above-mentioned studies show the importance of socialising and of connecting with others in the activities undertaken (Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013; Lebar *et al.*, 2014; Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Liddle, Parkinson and Sibbritt, 2013; Tzanidaki and Reynolds, 2011; Aguilar *et al.*, 2010). The

concepts of belonging, interdependence and connectedness have all been discussed in the occupational therapy and occupational science literature, especially in terms of the differences between the individualistic values of the West and the collective values of the East (Hammell, 2014; Hammell and Iwama, 2012). A number of studies have explored older adults' experiences of undertaking activities alongside others (Nyman, Josephsson and Isaksson, 2014; van Nes *et al.*, 2013; Bonder, 2006). For example, Nyman, Josephsson and Isaksson (2014) conducted three focus groups with 12 older adults (six men and six women) to explore their experiences of 'togetherness'. The resulting findings highlighted that togetherness played an important role in maintaining personal identity in a social context. The researchers noted that togetherness can change through life's many transitions and the importance of a sense of belonging to forestall loneliness. Participants discussed being connected to others as natural and especially important in old age. The fact that participants' age span was wide, in this study (65-80 years), and that all had been recruited from one retirement organisation may limit the study findings. Although Nyman and colleagues' aims and methods used were different to those used in the current study, their findings indicate the importance of occupational engagement alongside others in older age.

The importance of engaging in occupation as a couple was identified in a two-year longitudinal study by van Nes *et al.* (2013). This study explored eight Dutch community-living older couples' engagement in everyday activities over time. Interviews were conducted with participants both individually and as couples to explore the range of potential perspectives used in constructing meaning. The findings suggested that the couples' everyday activities, over time, represented

a process of convergence, to the point that undertaking activities became each couples' own small world. The participants also acknowledged the importance of moving away from such convergence, in order to stay socially connected and to maintain their individual functional abilities. This study may be limited in terms of having both individuals and couples as units of analysis. The translation into English may also be influential, as meanings can be lost in translation (van Nes *et al.*, 2010). Despite this, the insight into the ways that some older couples experience their everyday activities is also of relevance to the current study.

Research indicates that family connections play a significant role in older people's lives, as noted by Fitzgerald (2004) and some of the previously-mentioned Slovenian studies (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002; Petrič in Zupančič, 2012; Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013; Lebar *et al.*, 2014). The importance of family-based activities was identified in a qualitative American study undertaken by Bonder (2006) with 26 community-living older adults, aged 60 to 85 years. This study's findings highlighted that participants primarily engaged in family activities for enjoyment and pleasure. Bonder (2006) also revealed that family-based occupations are often a two-way process of giving and receiving, with older people playing important roles as parents or grandparents. The fact that Bonder (2006) used the 'Role Change Assessment' (Jackoway *et al.*, 1987) to guide her interviews, potentially limiting the extent of the detail in participants' responses. Participants' ages also varied widely; leading to possible differences between their responses. In addition, Bonder (2006) used 'snowball sampling', which may cause participants to come from similar backgrounds; potentially resulting in bias. Bonder's (2006) findings are, however, of great relevance to the current study, as family interactions have

been found to be important in previous Slovenian research (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002).

3.2.3 Older people, meaningful occupation and place

The places or spaces in which people engage in activities have been found to be vital to the meanings given to those activities (Rowles, 2008; Heatwole Shank and Cutchin, 2010; Ikiugu and Pollard, 2015). In a wide-ranging discussion of the importance of place, in occupational science, Rowles (2008, p. 128) states: 'Meaning is shaped by environment – the places in which we grow up, live our lives and grow old.' A transactional relationship between persons and places has been proposed, with occupation being central in this relationship (Cutchin, 2004; Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006). Such concepts are of significant importance to the current study, as it proposes links between the meanings that older people attach to their occupations, and the places in which they live and engage in these occupations.

American researchers Heatwole Shank and Cutchin (2010) explored the generation of meaning through occupation, in relation to a transactional relationship between people and places. They interviewed three older women who lived alone, one of them in an independent apartment in a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). Data were collected from two interviews with each participant, combined with researcher's observations. For these women, meaning was generated by the activities that they undertook which were, in turn, significant to their identities. Participants' social connections also provided an important source of meaning, as did the familiar places in which these

activities occurred; indicating the transactional aspect of occupation. This link was especially evident for the participant who had moved into the CCRC, whose meaningful occupations were affected by her change of environment. This study has some limitations due to the fact that only women were involved and that each participant was free to define and understand the concept of meaning in their own way. The researchers' use of grounded theory to analyse their data may also have caused limitations, as meaning might be better explored by other research approaches, such as phenomenology, which offer a deeper exploration of individuals' experiences and related meanings (Finlay, 2011). This study supports the need for further research into the influence of older people's environments on their meaningful occupations; the area of the current study.

Individuals' home environments offer a variety of meaningful occupations, which may be lost on admission to an institution, such as a care home (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008). The European Union-funded 'ENABLE-AGE' research project explored the contributions made by older adults' home environments towards their occupational engagement. This comprehensive project recruited 1918 people from five European countries (Green *et al.*, 2005; Haak *et al.*, 2007; Dahlin-Ivanoff *et al.*, 2007). The multiple meanings of 'home', among 40 Swedish single-living older people, was explored in a qualitative study by Dahlin-Ivanoff *et al.* (2007). This study aimed to explore both the meaning of home and the ways in which respondents related the concept of home to other concepts of autonomy, well-being and participation. The findings highlighted that participants experienced 'home' as a place of familiarity and security. 'Home' evoked feelings of comfort and enabled participants to engage freely in

their valued occupations whenever they chose to do so. Home was also a place of reminiscence, where they felt connected to their past and to people. Potential limitations of this study include the fact that the interviews were conducted by four researchers, as each one may have built different levels of rapport with participants and asked different questions as a result. In addition, there was no indication how the researchers had addressed potential language issues, as the original Swedish dialogue required translation into English, and meanings can be lost in translation.

Older people's experiences of independence, in their own homes were explored by Haak *et al.* (2007) in the same sample of Swedish participants as those recruited by Dahlin-Ivanoff *et al.* (2007). Haak and colleagues' (2007) findings showed that participants' definitions of independence changed over time, from being independent in occupational performance without any help, to making autonomous decisions about everyday life. Participants' decreased functional abilities forced them to think about potentially moving into sheltered accommodation, but they postponed such a move by adapting their everyday activities and/or undertaking other activities to maintain their functional independence. This study's limitations echo those of the previous study. In addition, it is unclear whether Haak and colleagues' (2007) sought to answer their two research questions during one or both of the study interviews.

A third paper, by Green *et al.* (2005), was also based on the above project; presenting findings from the same group of 40 Swedish older people alongside those from 40 older adults from the UK. Although this study gives valuable insights into the ways that participants' home environments enabled them to

continue to undertake their valued occupations (within their homes and in places nearby), the research process was not described clearly and the findings lacked discussion. These issues were especially important, as the findings came from international data. Potential challenges, in terms of language barriers, also went un-addressed by the researchers. This study would have benefitted from additional discussion of its findings, to consider ways in which participants' specific socio-cultural environments might have influenced their occupational engagement within their own homes. Despite these limitations, all three of the above studies are highly relevant to the current study, as the latter focuses on older people's occupational engagement at home and following relocation to a care home. The findings from these three studies may not, however, be transferrable internationally; indicating the need to explore and understand this area in different socio-cultural contexts.

A wide range of studies was identified, exploring older people's engagement in occupation, with some relating to health and well-being and others to the meaning that older people attach to particular activities or areas of activity. The research indicated that people's socio-cultural contexts influence their experiences of engagement in occupation and the meanings they attach to their occupations. There is limited evidence about Slovenian older people's occupational engagement, with no studies being identified that address the meanings that older Slovenian people attach to their occupations in their specific socio-cultural context. The first stage of the current research aims to understand the ways in which Slovenian older adults experience their occupational engagement; focusing particularly on their meaningful

occupations. The methodology and methods used to explore this topic will be discussed in the following section.

3.3 Methodology and Methods – Stage 1

This part of the chapter provides an overview of the Methodology and Methods used in Stage 1 and Stage 2 of this research. Since both of these stages used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), to approach and to analyse the data, this methodology and data analysis method will now be explained and discussed in detail. As procedures used to collect and analyse the data varied in places in Stage 1 and Stage 2, these differences will be explained for each stage separately.

3.3.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Stage 1 of this research explored Slovenian older people's individual experiences of occupational engagement; including engagement in their most meaningful occupations. Stage 2 went on to investigate the ways in which a transition into a care home influenced Slovenian older people's experiences of engaging in meaningful occupations. As discussed in the previous chapter, interpretative phenomenology (Heidegger, 1953) served as a philosophical orientation for the first two stages of this research. The ideas of theorists such as Heidegger (1953) and Gadamer (2004) have led scholars and researchers to develop guidelines to apply these theories to practice (Giorgi, 1985; Finlay, 2011). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is one such approach,

which has increased in popularity over the past twenty years (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Pringle *et al.*, 2011).

IPA, originating from psychology, draws on the fundamental principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography to explore the ways in which individuals make sense of their life experiences (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). People's experiences of important life events leads them to reflect upon the significance of these experiences and IPA is used to explore these reflections (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The approach's focus on the subjective aspects of peoples' behaviours (Bogdan and Knopp Biklen, 2006) and lived experiences highlights the strong influence of phenomenology (Clarke, 2009); as detailed in the previous chapter.

3.3.1.1 Hermeneutic Circle

The hermeneutical aspect of IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) suggests that it is impossible to access individuals' experiences without interpretation (Heidegger, 1953). The word 'hermeneutics' comes from the Greek for 'interpreting' or 'clarifying'; originating in turn from Hermes's mythological role in translating divine messages for human ears (Petkiewicz and Smith, 2014). The hermeneutic aspect of phenomenology was developed by Heidegger (1953, p. 59), who emphasised the significance of interpretation, based on people's connections to their contexts or 'being in the world'. Heidegger (1953, p. 139) wrote that 'the development of understanding is interpretation', highlighting that, through interpretation, 'understanding does not become something different, but rather itself'. From this perspective, the older people's experiences of

occupational engagement in the current research can only be understood through interpretation, because that is when these experiences are revealed.

A resonant idea in hermeneutics is the concept of the 'hermeneutic circle'; suggested and discussed by hermeneutic writers (Heidegger, 1953; Gadamer, 2004). For example, Heidegger (1953) suggests that things can have less visible meanings and/or the meanings can be manifested at the surface. With regard to IPA analysis, this view leads to a process of interpretation that requires researchers to move back and forth analytically, when considering their data, in order to gain different perspectives at different levels (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). For example, when analysing participants' interview transcripts, some meanings will become evident from reading the text, but others will only be revealed by 'reading between the lines' and adopting an interrogative manner of data analysis. In addition to the above, Gadamer (2004) focuses on the use of language, suggesting that readers should challenge forms of speech captured in the text to search for meaning. The linguistic aspect of IPA data analysis is important (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) in the hunt for varied nuances and/or metaphorical meanings within participants' language. IPA analysis is further described as a 'double interpretation', or a so-called 'double hermeneutic', which involves the researcher making sense of the participants' own sense-making (Smith and Osborn, 2008). Given this, it is of paramount importance that researchers remain aware that their previous experiences and knowledge can influence the data analysis process (Clarke, 2009). Reflexivity is therefore considered an important part of IPA; to be embedded throughout the research process (Finlay, 2011, Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). It was duly employed in the current research.

3.3.1.2 Idiography

What separates IPA from other hermeneutic research approaches is its commitment to individuals; seeking to understand phenomena from individuals' particular perspectives in their particular contexts (Finlay, 2011). This commitment to the individual and focus on the particular indicates the influence of idiography on IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). As noted previously, IPA originates from psychology, which is committed to nomothetic principles and to making claims at population or group levels (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) acknowledged the problems posed by adoption of a nomothetic approach as it failed to acknowledge the individuals who provided the data in the first place. Although this idiographic commitment is considered unusual, even in qualitative research (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014), IPA focuses on exploring participants' individual perspectives in their unique contexts. The first two stages of this research focus on the individual older Slovenian participants' experiences of occupational engagement, in their particular socio-cultural contexts.

Ashworth and Greasley (2009, p. 561) describe the existence of an 'idiographic sensibility'; 'an awareness of the individuality of the lifeworld'. This sensibility is revealed in the depth and detail of the IPA analysis process (Finlay, 2011); underpinning IPA studies' use of small, purposefully selected participant groups. Ashworth and Greasley (2009) emphasise the significance of this sensibility in enabling phenomenological studies to understand the chosen study phenomena fully. In order to understand Slovenian older peoples' experiences of occupational engagement in depth, the researcher therefore had to focus on

each individual separately. Each case was analysed individually first, before moving on to the next one. The use of reflexivity was once again important here. By allowing the researcher to focus fully on individual participants, in their specific personal contexts, cases' analysis were less likely to influence one another.

3.3.1.3 Summary

The above highlights that IPA has varied philosophical underpinnings; translating them into a practical application for research. In the current research, the researcher's provision of detailed accounts of participants' experiences of occupational engagement indicates the strong influence of phenomenology. The influence of hermeneutic phenomenology was evident throughout the research, through interpretative engagement with the data and through the adoption of a phenomenological attitude, as suggested by Finlay (2011). The latter involved the researcher stepping aside from her previous understandings of the research topic, whilst at the same time being aware of these understandings and reflecting upon them throughout the research process. The researcher also used the 'double hermeneutic' approach described by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009); interpreting, or making sense of, the ways in which the research participants interpreted their own experiences of the study phenomenon. Finally, an idiographic influence appeared throughout the study, demonstrated in the researcher's commitment to understanding participants' individual experiences in their individual life contexts.

3.3.2 Critique of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Despite IPA's valuable contribution to qualitative research, which has been acknowledged widely in the literature (Todorova, 2011; Finlay, 2011; Pringle *et al.*, 2011; Clarke, 2009), the approach has also been subject to critique (Giorgi, 2010; Chamberlain, 2011; Todorova, 2011). For example, Giorgi (2010) suggests that IPA lacks scientific rigour; its non-prescriptive methods preventing researchers from replicating the research process and thus from checking the quality of any findings. IPA is not alone in this, with qualitative research processes being less prescriptive, in principle, than their quantitative counterparts (Smith, 2010). Instead of prescription, IPA offers a set of flexible guidelines illustrating possible ways to proceed. Such guidelines enable the research approach to remain flexible, and therefore adaptable, as needed (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). Such flexibility does not preclude independent audit, with IPA researchers providing audit trails of their research processes, including evidence to support their data analysis. This enables those supervising the work of novice researchers to check the credibility of any links made between original study transcripts, the researchers' annotations and interpretations and any emergent themes. The interpretative nature of IPA analysis makes it challenging to make sense of someone else's interpretations, however, rendering the value of an audit trail at this level questionable.

Giorgi (2010) provided further critique, questioning IPA's phenomenological credentials; citing its move away from the origins of phenomenology as described by Husserl (Husserl, 1960). However, IPA adopts Heidegger's views on phenomenology (Heidegger, 1953), incorporating the significance of

interpretation in considering peoples' experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Finlay, 2011). Furthermore, IPA synthesises ideas from both phenomenology and hermeneutics, resulting in the method being both descriptive and interpretative (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014).

IPA has also been critiqued in the literature for its use of small and homogenous research samples. For example, Pringle *et al.* (2011) argue that findings from a small, specific, sample group might be hard to relate to a broad context. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), however, suggest that findings' richness and transparency should support their transferability. IPA's commitment to idiography has been acknowledged as unusual (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014) and seen as a potential weakness (Pringle *et al.*, 2011). However, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) emphasise that IPA aims for transferability of its findings to other individuals and contexts, rather than generalisability. The idiographic aspect of IPA is what separates it from other hermeneutic approaches (Finlay, 2011). Given this, rich, transparent findings are vital if readers are to evaluate particular findings' transferability to other individuals or broader societal groups.

IPA has also been critiqued for the interpretative nature of its data analysis process. Concerns have been raised that studies' movement away from participants' meanings risks downplaying the focus that should be given to the phenomena under review (Pringle *et al.*, 2011). However, incorporating reflexivity throughout the research process should enable IPA researchers to remain aware of their possible biases and preconceptions (Finlay, 2008). Writing reflective diaries, and engaging in on-going introspection, are of

paramount importance in examining the ways in which researchers' values and attitudes might impact on the data analysis process and emergent findings. Chamberlain (2011) voiced a further IPA data analysis critique, noting that researchers' hunt for convergence and divergence in their study data is not unique to IPA. In Chamberlain's (2011) view, the subtle nuances of human experience should be revealed by all qualitative data analysis methods. While the latter may be true, the idiographic aspect of IPA offers a good opportunity to discover these nuances. Researchers' use of participants' quotes or metaphors, in their final write-up or as theme titles, enables them to stay close to individuals' original accounts (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Pringle *et al.*, 2011).

3.3.3 Research methods

Stage 1 of this research explored individual Slovenian older people's experiences of occupational engagement, including their engagement in their most personally meaningful occupations. The following paragraphs discuss the research methods used to answer the related research question (see page 20). This section details the processes and strategies employed to recruit participants, before moving on to consider the related data collection and data analysis methods. These methods' usage, in Stage 1 of this study, will now be explained.

3.3.3.1 Sampling Approach and Recruitment Process – Stage 1

In principle, an IPA study's sampling approach must not only reflect the general qualitative research paradigm, but must also be consistent with IPA methodology (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Phenomenological research does not aim to recruit representative participant samples, but seeks to explore individuals' personal experiences and meanings (Finlay, 2011). This is especially relevant for IPA studies, where the idiographic dimension requires the recruitment of small samples, in order to understand particular experiences in particular contexts (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). In light of the above, purposive sampling was adopted in the current research, with participants being selected strategically for their relevance to the chosen research question (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Purposive sampling seeks not to generalise studies' findings to populations, but instead to study 'information-rich cases' that are able to provide detailed insights and in-depth understanding of the topic of interest (Patton, 2015, p. 30). The selected current study participants therefore present one perspective on Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupation, but do not represent the views of all Slovenian older people on this topic.

IPA studies tend to use homogeneous samples (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009); aiming to include participants with very similar characteristics (Patton, 2015). In principle, such sampling seeks to study research participants' common characteristics (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). However, the authors of IPA emphasise the importance of not treating participants in a homogeneous sample as an 'identikit', but rather of seeking to elicit detailed variations

between their experiences, focusing on both the converging and the diverging aspects (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 49). Given this, the Stage 1 sampling process sought to recruit a small sample of older Slovenians, with inclusion criteria that enabled this homogeneity, but at the same time stayed open to variations between participants' experiences.

Study sampling and participant recruitment – Stage 1

Stage 1 of this research explored individual Slovenian older people's engagement in occupation, including their most meaningful occupations. As this research stage also informed Stage 2 (exploring the ways in which transition into a care home influences Slovenian older people's meaningful occupations), participants needed to be of similar ages in both stages. No information was found about older Slovenians' age, at the time of relocating into care homes. Official statistics indicate that in 2010, almost two thirds of care home residents in Slovenia were aged 80+ years (63.9%), with a further 16.01% being aged 75-79 years and the remaining fifth (20.09%) being less than 75 years old (Republic of Slovenia Statistical Office, 2010b). Based on the above, inclusion criteria for Stage 1 of this research encompassed Slovenian older adults, aged 75-85 years, who were living independently in their own home environments.

As a result of the above, the Stage 1 study sample was homogeneous, in terms of participants' ages, and all were independently living in their own home environments. This sampling strategy did not preclude variations between participants; enabling the researcher to explore the variety of their life experiences. Both men and women took part in the study, with some

participants living in flats and others in houses; some in urban settings and others in rural areas of Slovenia (see Table 4). The study excluded older adults with cognitive frailty, or poor communication skills, as older adults with cognitive issues would not be living independently in their home environment and older adults with communication problems might have issues with elaborating on their experiences of engagement in meaningful occupations. Stage 1 of this research sought to explore older Slovenians' experiences of engaging in meaningful occupations whilst living independently in their own home environments.

The recruitment process- Stage 1

Seniors' organisations and clubs were chosen as a first point of contact to identify potential study participants. These clubs exist to organise sporting, social and cultural activities and events for Slovenian older adults, in order to promote active ageing and health (Zveza društev upokojencev Slovenije, 2017). The researcher wrote to the presidents of five of these clubs with an information letter, outlining the research (Appendix B). These individuals were chosen as they served as 'gatekeepers' to their club members (Creswell, 2013). Two of those contacted responded, and both agreed to forward the study information on to potential participants (Appendix C), asking that they then contact the researcher if they were interested in participating. The information letter outlined the research aims, described its nature briefly, stated that ethical consent for its conduct had been received and confirmed that any contact information given would be used solely for the purpose of this research. The response rate, following this initial approach, was poor with only three participants being recruited.

In order to locate other study participants, the researcher asked a number of her professional and personal contacts to forward the study information to potential recruits. Two of these contacts were occupational therapists, who knew older community-living adults who might be prepared to take part. Accessing study participants via 'referrals' from organisational gatekeepers and/or 'opportunities' generated by researchers' personal contacts, are the most frequent recruitment methods in IPA studies (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p49). It is important to emphasise, here, that the current researcher did not know any of her study participants in advance; removing one source of potential influence on their responses. Older adults who decided to participate, after reading the provided study information letter, gave the researcher's contact permission to forward their contact details on to the researcher. In total, ten people decided to take part in the study, following this approach. They were five men and five women, aged 76-83 years, all of whom were living independently in their own home environments. Participants' demographic details are outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Participant information – Stage 1

Participant	Age	Gender	Living situation
Kristina	83	F	living alone in a flat in the city
Jera	80	F	living with her daughter in a flat in the city
Rozi	83	F	living with her son in a house (on a farm) in a small village
Meta	82	F	living with her husband in a house in a small town
Lidija	82	F	living with her husband in a house in a small town
Peter	76	M	living alone in a house in a small town
Tone	78	M	living with his wife in a house in a small town
Robert	77	M	living alone in a house in the city
Mitja	80	M	living with his wife in a flat in the city and in a small village (having a weekend cottage)
Leon	76	M	living with his wife in a house in the city

Note: Pseudonyms are used above to ensure participants' anonymity.

3.3.3.2 Data collection – Stage 1

Stage 1 of this research explored Slovenian older people's individual experiences of occupational engagement, with a particular focus on their engagement in their most meaningful occupations. Epistemologically, this research acknowledges that individuals' knowledge of reality is subjective and co-created between the researcher and the research participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Given this, the methods used to acquire the study data should facilitate a dialogue between the two; enabling them to construct a meaningful reality collaboratively (Angen, 2000). Creswell (2013) suggests that researchers' use of particular qualitative research approaches usually leads them towards preferred data collection methods, linked to that approach. In the current research, the first two stages had phenomenological underpinnings;

indicating the need to choose a data collection method that provided rich descriptions of participants' experiences. In-depth, one-to-one, interviews are the most commonly used data collection method in phenomenological studies; allowing for detailed explorations of participants' individual experiences and meanings (Creswell, 2013). Following the review of the research literature, researcher's academic experience and a discussion with her research supervisors, in-depth, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were chosen as Stage 1 and Stage 2 data collection method.

Interviews and Interview schedules

Phenomenological interviewing techniques differ from those used in other qualitative research approaches; focusing on eliciting accounts of interviewees' lived experiences in order to describe phenomena 'in a concrete and lived-through way' (Patton, 2015, p. 432). Phenomenological researchers aim to dwell with the participants' experiences (linger over), in order to best understand the meanings attached to them (Finlay, 2011). These meanings are informed by the participants' contextual factors, which influence the ways in which they make sense of their experiences (Miller and Glassner, 2011). In the current research, Slovenian older peoples' social, cultural and historical contexts influenced the meanings that they attached to their occupational engagement experiences. The interview process enabled the researcher and the participants, together, to explore and to generate meanings from these experiences (Finlay, 2011).

The ontological and epistemological positions of the current research support data collection methods that allow the participants to elaborate on their individual experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. People construct their own subjective realities in interaction with their contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). In addition, the interpretative phenomenology used for the first two stages of the current research argues that people's experiences are only revealed through their interpretation, based on the world in which they live (Heidegger, 1953; Gadamer, 1990). In principle, interviews may be structured, semi-structured or unstructured (Braun and Clarke, 2013). As structured interviews limit participants' responses, with the aim of generalising the resulting findings, this approach is more appropriate in quantitative studies, with a background in positivism (Bryman, 2012). Structured interviews would also fail to capture the subjective and personal meanings that interviewees attach to their experiences (Sullivan, 2001). Finally, the interpretative paradigm, used in the current study, supports the existence of multiple interpretations, truths and meanings (Topping, 2010).

Phenomenological interviews are usually either semi-structured or unstructured in nature (Finlay, 2011). Unstructured interviews, which may be based on a single question, allow participants to elaborate freely on the topic of interest, but may generate widely diverse data; rendering analysis challenging (Patton, 2015). In contrast, semi-structured interviews make use of pre-prepared interview 'schedules', containing open guiding questions, in order to explore topics of interest (Bryman, 2012). The latter approach still allows the participants to raise issues that researchers may not have anticipated (Braun and Clarke, 2013), but the interview covers the same questions and topics with

all participants (Bryman, 2012). Given the above, semi-structured interviews were used in the current research study; enabling both flexible data collection and consistency in terms of the key topics covered.

The researcher developed a brief interview schedule in advance, with a list of questions to guide the conversations with the current study participants (Bryman, 2012) (Appendix D). In principle, such schedules help researchers to listen more actively to interviewees' responses and to create more comfortable interpersonal interactions with them (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). A semi-structured approach frees interviewers to engage in spontaneous conversations about expected or unexpected interview topics; safe in the knowledge that their interview schedules will ensure that all relevant study questions and topics will be covered (Patton, 2015). The open-ended questions, used in the current research interview schedule, both allowed the participants to express their unique experiences in their own words and enabled them to elaborate upon the topics of interest. In principle, open-ended questions generate more fruitful and salient responses, from interview participants, than closed (fixed response) questions (Patton, 2015; Finlay, 2011). The researcher also used probing techniques to explore important issues, raised by participants, in greater depth (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

The interview schedule in each stage (Stage 1 and Stage 2) (Appendix D, Appendix J, Appendix K) was discussed with the supervisors before the initial interview (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Braun and Clarke, 2013). Although formal pilot interviews are not seen as necessary in qualitative research (Collins, 2010), early study interviews can improve later ones through

amendments to the initial interview schedule (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Collins, 2010). These guidelines were followed also in the current research where the first interview of each stage was analysed and discussed with the supervisors before the next one took place. The interview schedule was thoroughly reviewed after the first interview, however no particular amendments were implemented since the data analysis of the first interview revealed that the data was rich and contributed to answering the research question.

Data collection procedure – Stage 1

Stage 1 of the current research explored Slovenian older people's experiences of occupational engagement, including their engagement in their most personally meaningful occupations. The researcher interviewed the ten older Slovenian participants, at one time-point (Patton, 2015), guided by a purpose-designed interview schedule, as described above (Appendix D). In principle, the researcher used the guiding questions only to initiate the conversation, using probing questions during the interview to further explore the topics raised and to elicit further participant responses (Bryman, 2012). Although the same guiding questions were used for all study participants, each person was encouraged to provide depth and detail about their experiences, with examples where relevant.

The researcher in the current research sought to memorise the interview schedule questions, as far as possible, to reduce the interviews' apparent formality. It was also important to choose an interview location that was convenient for participants and in which they felt comfortable to explore their experiences. Eight interviews were conducted in participants' homes and two in

participants' places of work. Braun and Clarke (2013) advise that researchers consider their personal safety, when conducting interviews alone in people's homes or workplaces. The current study researcher always informed the 'gatekeeper' about the time and place of each interview and also informed them about completing the interview. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the Slovenian language. The researcher started each interview with informal conversation, which helped to build rapport with participants and to make them feel more at ease. Before the start of the interviews, the researcher and the participants read through the consent form together. The researcher repeated the previously-given information about confidentiality and anonymity, reconfirmed participants' right to withdraw from the study and confirmed that the participants gave permission to record their interviews. A study consent form was also signed, by both the researcher and by the participants, before the interviews began (Appendix L). The researcher then went on to repeat the purpose of the study and, in simple words explained and discussed with the participants the meaning of the term 'occupation', in the context of occupational therapy. The study interviews lasted approximately one hour. The researcher ended the interviews by asking the participants if there was anything that had been covered, or not, that they wished to add. Afterwards, the researcher spent some time debriefing the participants to check that the interview session had not left them feeling distressed, for any reason. All of the interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and were then transcribed verbatim by the researcher in Slovenian language.

3.3.3.3 Data analysis

Analysing qualitative research data can be challenging, as it usually exists as large amounts of unstructured text (Bryman, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2013) indicate that qualitative analysis covers a broad spectrum, from descriptive to interpretative analysis. While descriptive methods aim to explore and describe the topic, interpretative analysis go further, seeking a deep understanding of the topics of interest. As noted previously, the philosophical underpinnings of IPA come from interpretative phenomenology and hermeneutics (Heidegger, 1953; Gadamer, 1990). These authors emphasise the importance of interpretation and the 'hermeneutic circle' in revealing the participants' experiences and meanings; noting that the latter are sometimes easily seen and, at other times, are hidden. Moreover, IPA uses a 'double hermeneutic', highlighting that researchers must make sense of participants' efforts to make sense of their personal experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p35). This process leads researchers to a close interpretative engagement with their study data. The current study explored Slovenian older peoples' experiences of occupational engagement in detail, with IPA enabling the researcher to generate rich, detailed findings on this topic (Pringle *et al.*, 2011).

Although the following paragraphs describe the Stage 1 data analysis process, most of the following steps were also taken in Stage 2, which also used IPA as its data analysis method. It must be emphasised, here, that all of the interviews in both study stages were conducted and analysed in the Slovenian language. Staying in the original language enables the researcher to maintain all the nuances of participants' accounts, which could be lost if the study transcripts

were translated into a second language (van Nes *et al.*, 2010). After the data analysis of the initial interviews in Slovenian language was completed, the initial interviews of each stage, together with the coding process were translated into English. Two interviews in Stage 1 and three interviews in Stage 2, together with the data analysis process, were translated into English language. This step was taken to enable the researcher to check the data analysis process with her academic supervisors (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The process further enabled the development of themes to be checked by the supervisors in terms of their validity in relation to the transcript. All of the remaining interviews were also analysed in Slovenian, although all of the emergent themes, super-ordinate themes and master themes were translated into English. Additional methods to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings were employed and will be discussed under the upcoming sections.

The interviews were transcribed and then analysed following guidelines provided in the IPA literature (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith and Osborn, 2008). Although the initial steps of the data analysis process did not differ, between the two stages, there were differences in its later steps, as Stage 2 used a longitudinal data collection approach. With this in mind, the data analysis procedure will be explained for each stage separately.

Data analysis procedure – Stage 1

Stage 1 of this research explored ten Slovenian older adults' experiences of occupational engagement, using semi-structured interviews which were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The subsequent data analysis process was

informed by guidelines published by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). Although these authors offer advice to guide the data analysis process, there is also acknowledgement that IPA is a non-prescriptive and flexible research method, open to researchers' creativity (Smith, 2010; Smith and Osborn, 2008; Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). For example, whilst some researchers choose to analyse their study transcripts using a computer, the current researcher coded her transcripts, in the Slovenian language, by hand. As mentioned previously, the initial transcripts together with the data analysis process, in each stage, were then translated into English, in a Word document, using colour-coding (Appendix E).

The researcher familiarised herself with the study data by listening to the interview recordings and then transcribing them verbatim in Slovenian. She then read and re-read each of the interviews, whilst listening to their recordings, in order to re-enter and immerse herself in participants' worlds. At the same time, she wrote initial notes and comments in the margins of the study transcripts, relating to descriptive, linguistic and conceptual concepts in the written text. The descriptive comments focused on the content of the transcript, taken at face value. The linguistic comments considered such elements as participants' specific use of language, pronunciation, use of metaphors etc. This aspect of the data analysis and its challenges will be discussed in more detail elsewhere (page 92), as analysing data in one language (Slovenian), and later translating it into a second (English), may influence or change specific language-dependent meanings (Santos, Black and Sandelowski, 2015). In the third aspect of the initial noting process the researcher considered the data at a conceptual level; interrogating and questioning participants' accounts to record

her own interpretations of this material. An important aspect of conceptual coding is personal reflection, as researchers move between their pre-existing understanding of the topic of interest and new understandings, emerging from participants' accounts (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). For example, in the current research, the researcher's occupational therapy background informs her understanding of occupational engagement. In principle, it was important that she reflected on this situation, whilst analysing the study data, and sought to stay open to participants' unique life experiences.

The initial, exploratory comments developed from the first transcript were then analysed; searching for interrelationships, connections and patterns between them. A number of emergent themes were then developed and recorded (Table 5). The researcher typed all of themes that emerged from the first interview into a 'Word' document and printed them out. The resulting list was then physically cut up so that each emergent theme appeared on a separate sheet of paper. By searching for similarities and differences between the emergent themes, the researcher was then able to cluster the original themes into super-ordinate themes. Different strategies were used to develop the super-ordinate themes. These included abstraction (the process of identifying patterns between the emergent themes), subsumption (the process by which one emergent theme takes over the role of a super-ordinate theme; helping to bring together related themes) and numeration (the process of noting the frequency with which an emergent theme appears) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). For example, if several of a participant's emergent themes related to temporal aspects of their everyday occupations, then this identification of 'patterns of routine' led to the generation of a superordinate theme. Also, if an emergent theme was identified

as relating to 'adjusting occupations', and a participant gave several examples of such adjustments throughout their interview, this emergent theme would be re-designated into a super-ordinate one.

The data from the first Stage 1 interview were analysed before conducting the next interview, but time constraints prevented the researcher from analysing every transcript before conducting the next interview. In order to maintain the idiographic orientation of IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), that is to set aside ideas from a previous interview, the researcher first transcribed all of the Stage 1 interviews and then analysed them at two day intervals. The above data analysis process was repeated with each interview transcript (Appendix E, Appendix F). This approach enabled the researcher to treat each case individually; considering fully the personal experiences of each participant at a particular point in time. The above process resulted in a list of super-ordinate themes for each Slovenian older adult who participated in Stage 1 of this research (Appendix G).

Following the above, the researcher looked for patterns across all ten cases; laying all ten tables on a large surface. She then performed a cross-case analysis to identify meanings that participants shared. This final stage of data analysis led to the emergence of four Master themes with sub-themes highlighting convergences and divergences in participants' experiences (Appendix H). The initial steps of the data analysis process are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Example of the Initial IPA Analysis

Initial/ Exploratory comments	Transcript (Kristina)	Emergent Themes
<p>Evening kind of person <i>(When saying that, she smiles in a shy manner, as she was apologising)</i></p> <p><u>Is getting up early perceived as a good quality?</u></p> <p>Time for her morning ritual</p>	<p>My ordinary day is..I don't get up very early, because... I'm more of an evening type of person,...I rarely go to bed before midnight and then in the morning I don't get up at 6, but between 7 and 8.....it happens that even later, not often, but it happens.</p> <p>After that, it's time for my morning ritual.</p>	<p>NOT GETTING UP 'TOO EARLY' (EVENING PERSON)</p> <p>EARLY RISING AS A VALUE?</p> <p>HER MORNING RITUAL</p>

Legend:

Descriptive comments appear in **normal text**

Linguistic comments appear in ***italic text***

Conceptual comments are **underlined**

The colours indicate matching elements of text, as they appear in one initial study transcript, initial/exploratory comments and emergent themes.

Linguistic Challenges

The researcher collected and analysed the current study data in her native language (Slovenian); later translating it into English to check the analysis process with her academic supervisors and to present the study findings. The details of this process are a vital part of cross-language qualitative research because they play a significant role in assuring the integrity of any resulting data (Piazzoli, 2015). Concepts may be understood differently, in different languages, and expressed meanings are often difficult to translate (van Nes *et al.*, 2010). The current study's use of IPA analysis made this task especially challenging, as an important aspect of the initial analysis process focuses on the interviewees' use of language and its nuances can be subtle and hard to describe (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Every language has its own

characteristics; resulting in some challenges for the researcher who transcribed and analysed the data in Slovenian and later translated selected quotes into English.

The first challenge was the common use of diminutives in the Slovenian language. This is most commonly indicated by following masculine, feminine or neutral nouns with a suffix representing the semantic component 'small' (Sicherl, 2013). In Slovenian language, diminutives are often used when referring to things in an endearing manner (things that are dear, and therefore potentially important, to the speaker). This approach is very common in the Slavic languages but differs from English, considered by linguists as a language where diminutives are rarely used or used in a different form (Schneider, 2013; Sicherl, 2013). Slovenian speakers' use of this semantic component influences the meaning of their words, which is of vital importance when using IPA. The researcher in the current research recognised this issue, when conducting her analysis, going on to explain the individual diminutives' meanings, in writing up her findings.

Metaphors can also be a powerful aspect of IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). As the interviews in the current research were conducted in Slovenian language, the metaphors that participants used were also Slovenian. Participants often used a proverb to express themselves; defined as 'a short generally known sentence of the folk which contains, wisdom, truth morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation' (Mieder, 2004, p. 3). For example, one participant used the metaphor 'made of a farmer's dough' which refers to

traditional Slovenian values, such as productivity and hard work. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) acknowledged that metaphors are language-specific and differ between cultures. In the current research, the proverbs used were specific to the Slovenian cultural context, making them challenging to translate.

The data were collected and analysed in the participants' and the researcher's native language. This approach is of vital importance, here, because IPA obliges the researchers to consider the linguistic characteristics of their data (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Some authors suggest that translation from an original language should be conducted before the data analysis (Santos, Black and Sandelowski, 2015). Other researchers state that the data from cross-cultural studies should stay in the original language for as long as possible (van Nes *et al.*, 2010). The current study researcher chose to take the latter approach, rather than risk losing any language-specific nuances in translation. The linguistic challenges were addressed in a number of ways, to increase the findings' trustworthiness. These steps will be discussed in the section of this document that addresses the quality of this research (page 317).

Reflexive Commentary

It was clear to me already during the analysis that some metaphors or particular words will be difficult to translate into English. However I soon realised that this did not really affect the analysis itself because I was a native speaker of the Slovenian language. I was able to recognise the meanings, and therefore the themes that emerged from the data were based on my recognition of the culture and language-specific meanings. The only challenging moment was when translating quotes where these non-translatable aspects were present. But the

quotes needed to be used to support my discussion of the findings. An English-speaking person may sometimes not recognise a particular meaning in the quote because the meaning was present in the Slovenian language. Therefore I had to explain when the diminutives or proverbs were part of the quotes and where a theme was developed based on them. However, it did make me wonder if a researcher who is not a native speaker of the original language would be able to do justice to the linguistic aspect of the IPA process.

3.4 Findings – Stage 1

The aim of Stage 1 of this research was to explore individual Slovenian older people's experiences of engagement in occupation, with a particular focus on their most meaningful occupations. Ten older adults participated in the study, with each interview being analysed separately, following Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) data analysis process (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Superordinate themes (Appendix G) were developed for each individual participant by looking across pre-existing emergent themes. Afterwards, Master themes with subthemes (Appendix H) were developed by looking across the superordinate themes of all ten participants. Individual participants will be described briefly, first, in order to contextualise their unique experiences of engagement in their meaningful occupations, acknowledging the idiographic aspect of the data analysis process. The themes that emerged from looking across the accounts of all ten participants will then be presented, to highlight

their converging and diverging experiences of this engagement. The quotations throughout the findings refer to the pseudonyms of the participants and the line numbers of the quotations from the analysed transcript.

Lidija

Lidija was 82 years old; living in a house in a small town with her husband. She had been active throughout her life and remained so in her later years. She enjoyed walking outdoors and working around her home; in the knowledge that she was maintaining her health by being active. One of Lidija's core values was that of 'productivity', as she had grown up on a farm, where hard work was fundamental to everyday life. Several times at interview, Lidija illustrated the meaning of productivity for her by using a well-known Slovenian proverb '*Work strengthens the man*'. Her use of this proverb suggested that she considered herself to be a hard-working person. Many times, she compared her working habits with those of other people, including her husband. Gardening was Lidija's life-long and most meaningful occupation. She spent most of her time in her garden, where she was able to combine her need for productivity with her love of flowers and '*home-grown*' vegetables.

'Gardening, yes.... I already have my own paprika ...(laughing), and aubergine..., the day before yesterday I planted them, and then I'll see if they grow. And then I'll take them... I have enough room downstairs, and I don't have to buy things [the vegetables]. You know, it's quite expensive. And I also plant potatoes... it would last through the whole winter... but I give them to my son.' (Lidija, 67-71)

Lidija attached several meanings to her engagement in gardening. Not only did she enjoy the work, but it also enabled her to watch her flowers and vegetables grow and to share them with her family and friends. She perceived owning a house as significant, as it enabled her to have a garden. She was proud both of having built a house and of having moved from her previous flat. Although Lidija was generally pleased with her level of health, she was also aware of her changing abilities and prepared to adjust her engagement in everyday occupations accordingly.

Robert

Robert was a 77-year-old retired surgeon, who was still running his private clinic. He lived alone in the city although he also had a weekend house in the country, where he enjoyed time spent with his friends and family. It was evident from the interview conducted, that Robert's profession was deeply embedded in his everyday life and it was essential for him that he remain engaged in profession-related occupations.

'...I don't want to brag, but my biggest pleasure was if an operation was successful, especially when I wasn't sure whether it would go well or not...and sometimes it didn't...but if it did, then I think that was my biggest pleasure. And now I think, let's say...there's 400 conditions that we know of, but there's so many of them that we don't know. So...those rare conditions...if I come upon something that wasn't discovered for a long time...and if I'm the one who does that with a person [a patient], then I think that's my biggest pleasure.' (Robert, 47-53)

Robert valued modesty, with regard to his profession, and several times generalised his work to other doctors. However, he particularly enjoyed if he

had achieved something unique, which suggested a degree of competitiveness. This trait was also highlighted when he spoke about his leisure occupations; most of which related to playing tennis and winter sports. He perceived physical activity as vital for maintaining health and had a strict schedule of weekly sporting occupations. Having regular occupations and routines was appeared meaningful to Robert. He even emphasised that his belief that older people should stay engaged in occupations that needed planning and that led to feelings of responsibility.

Tone

Tone was 78 years old and lived with his wife in a town-based house, along with his daughter and his daughter's family. He enjoyed his everyday routine, including a number of regular responsibilities to which he felt a strong sense of commitment. For example, ensuring that his grandson was on time for school and walking the dog enabled him to then enjoy his other daily occupations.

Tone came from a family of joiners and carpenters which had a great influence on the occupations that he found personally meaningful. Although he had a job, he remained engaged in joinery throughout his working life and into retirement; stating that joinery had always been his most meaningful occupation.

'I really enjoy when I turn on the machine. That sound, the buzzing...sometimes there are 22.000 turns, like someone would play...something, like a violin, I have it in my ears. And then I make those models, as much as I can.' (Tone, 222-226)

Interestingly, Tone was very aware of the meaning and enjoyment that he obtained from his chosen occupations; referring to joinery as his most meaningful occupation and gardening as his second most meaningful one. Tone noted that gardening had become more meaningful in recent years, as he became less occupied with more demanding joinery work due to arthritis. He also expressed pride in his annual fruit and vegetable crops and maintained a small vineyard. It was evident that gardening also enabled him to use his joinery skills as when, for example, he built fences for his fruit trees. He was very knowledgeable about the meaningfulness of his chosen occupations; following new trends in both joinery and gardening. These occupations gave him a sense of health and well-being, and he said that he would cry if ever he became unable to engage in them.

Rozi

Rozi was 82 years old; living on a farm in a small remote village with one of her sons. Her husband had died years earlier and her other two children had married and moved away. It was evident that farm-work had been her continuous occupation since her childhood and she was unfamiliar with any other way of life. Although Rozi acknowledged hard work as one of her main values, she was proud that she had never been an employee, but had instead always owned and developed the family farm. This enabled her to undertake regular farming responsibilities, resulting in regular routines, which gave her a sense of consistency and safety. She particularly enjoyed working with the soil, which made her feel well and *'never bored'*; an awareness that is perhaps

linked to her perception of the farm as her life's main achievement as well as her means of survival.

'I get well...if I'm ill, all I need to do is go to the fields and I immediately feel better. And I'm never bored...even if I work for a long time. Sometimes the children would come and get me. Ha, ha, ha...mum...you'll get wet, come home.' (Rozi, 688-691)

Although Rozi referred to her *'free moments'* during the study interviews, her comments referred to occupations that happened alongside her everyday responsibilities. For example, she said that she enjoyed watching television or reading the newspaper whilst she was cooking. The television shows that she chose to watch were usually linked to farm life. Rozi constantly strived for improvement and further development of the farm; highlighting her respect for education and knowledge. This link was further confirmed by her pride over her grandchildren's school achievements, which she emphasised several times during the study interviews. Maintaining good relationships with her family was very important to her and it was evident that she hoped that they would continue the family farming tradition.

Mitja

Mitja was an 80-year-old man whose occupations varied according to the season. He and his wife spent the winter in their city flat and the warmer months of the year in their weekend cottage in a small village elsewhere in Slovenia. Whilst in the city, Mitja enjoyed hiking in the nearby hills. The weekend cottage enabled him to enjoy his garden. Mitja had been an athlete, in his younger days, and he cherished the chance to remain physically active in old age. Given this,

he ensured that his retirement occupations involved an element of physical activity wherever possible.

'...it's a workout for a person...but not a formal exercise...for example, I really like...we have a garden in terraces and that means so much to me...so that I can walk around, you know? I love that...people say I should buy a garden hose, but I don't want to...I prefer walking around with cans.' (Mitja, 560-563)

Mitja was a sociable person who enjoyed the company of others; mostly his wife and a regular group of hiking friends. The interview showed that he enjoyed the role of organising hiking trips which combined his passion for fitness and his interest in Slovenian history. Mitja had a number of carefully arranged family photo albums and hiking brochures in his home, which he said that he enjoyed sorting out; supporting the apparent value that he gave to being organised in general. Mitja saw himself as *'a realist'*. Although he was proud of his current engagement in varied occupations, he emphasised the importance of abandoning some of them if required.

Jera

Jera was an 80-year-old woman living in a city centre flat with her daughter. She engaged in a variety of occupations, but differentiated between those that she enjoyed and those that she had to do. The interview suggested that different occupations had different purposes for her. For example, Jera liked going on Seniors Club day trips, to socialise, but also enjoyed engaging in some occupations alone. Her most meaningful occupation was going for a regular daily walk. She preferred to do this alone; indicating that the walk was more

than just a physical activity but an enjoyable chance to observe nature and to reflect on her life.

'My favourite thing is to go for a walk...That makes me feel very....but I like going by myself...because I feel I'm more relaxed and more focused...you know...observing the nature and all. But if I have someone with me, then I spend the time chatting. I think I don't relax as much as if I go alone.' (Jera, 172-175)

An important part of Jera's reflections focused on her memories, including regular walks that she had taken with her late husband and time that she had spent with her family at their weekend home. Her son's death, in her thirties, may have contributed to Jera being so reflective. Although she saw some of her domestic occupations as obligatory, they were also an essential part of her daily routine.

Peter

Peter was a 76 year old man whose wife had recently died; influencing his occupational engagement. His everyday routine, which was frequently linked to his nearby children and grandchildren, might have serve as a way to keep busy during his bereavement. Although he enjoyed looking after his grandchildren on a regular basis, he also saw this as thing of an obligation. Peter and his wife had been passionate world travellers, throughout their lives; an occupation that Peter combined with his hobby of photography. The interview suggested that Peter had recently started to disengage from occupations that he had previously enjoyed, however. This could be due to his continuing grief for his wife, but

could also be reflect a process of self-transformation; a more selective approach to his occupational engagement.

'You won't understand this because you're young, but all my joys have passed. I'm losing ... and that's a typical sign of getting old...I don't have any plans, I don't have any wishes...well, I do have wishes for the people around me to enjoy themselves and be well....but otherwise I don't have plans and that's a typical sign of getting old. Plans and wishes make a person young. For example...in the past, when there was snow I wanted to go to the mountains, when the pool started I wanted to go swimming...now I only go because of my granddaughter...this and that...but I don't have that urge...the desire for new experiences anymore.' (Peter, 514-522)

Although Peter was losing his aspirations for the future and becoming less engaged, he had also developed a higher awareness of what was meaningful to him. For example, he spoke about his enjoyment of daily routines such as going out to eat in a particular place, or chatting to a friendly waitress. He also reflected frequently on his shared experiences with his wife, which made him realise that some of the meanings that he attached to his occupations had been shared.

Meta

Meta was an 82-year-old woman, living with her husband in a small town. One of her two sons had recently died. She mentioned him regularly, throughout the interview, suggesting that she was still undergoing the bereavement process. Meta's son had been a musician and one of her regular morning routines was to turn on the kitchen radio and dance whilst her husband still slept. Her son had taught her how to dance, so this could be seen as a way of keeping his memory

alive. Meta also enjoyed dancing as a regular occupation on monthly day trips with other retirees from her local community. Otherwise, Meta spent most of her days enjoying her home, and especially her garden, which provided her most meaningful source of occupation. She shared her life-long love for gardening and flowers with two of her friends. She referred to gardening as her 'life', highlighting its value and importance to her.

'Flowers mean the most to me. Yes, gardening is my life...even Dr. XXX [her GP] said it...your flowers and the music, that's what keeps you going.' (Meta, 265-266)

Meta valued the fact that her doctor had noticed the benefits of her meaningful occupations, as she respected her doctor's professional opinion. Given the above, Meta clearly valued productivity and daily physical activity and therefore chose to engage consciously in health-promoting occupations.

Kristina

Kristina is an 83-year-old lady, living alone in a city centre flat. At interview, she spoke of her enjoyment of the everyday home routines that she had established over the years since her husband had died. Kristina's routines were more than simply a set of regular daily occupations however. Instead, Kristina took the time to enjoy every moment of her day; perhaps a reflection of her spirituality and regular morning meditation sessions. It was evident that Kristina planned her days with care, including adjusting some of her occupations in order to spend more time doing what she enjoyed. For example, her decision to prepare meals in advance could be interpreted as showing that domestic occupations

had less value to her than reading or attending cultural events. Kristina continued to visit the theatre; her most meaningful lifelong occupation.

'...you know...I think it lifts you off the ground a little [visiting the theatre]. We were taught to dress up for the theatre. From the hair to your dress which was only for visiting the theatre. When we were children I had this beautiful pink blouse, black velvet skirt with wide braces...and I felt so pretty to myself...'

Researcher: Do you still follow that today?

Well, I always get my hair done, that I don't look like this...that I have an appropriate dress you know...it's not something you wear in your everyday life.'
(Kristina, 396-402)

Kristina had first been to the theatre as a child, but had visited more regularly with her husband, who had been the chair of the local cultural society. She continued to follow the culture-related news and was proud of her personal acquaintance with several well-known cultural artists. Visiting the theatre and engaging in other cultural occupations gave Kristina membership of a particular social group of people, which she illustrated by saying that it 'lifted her off the ground'. This phrase could also suggest that watching plays enabled Kristina to detach herself from everyday reality. She saw going to the theatre as a special ritual with a particular dress code and behaviours that differed from everyday life.

Leon

Leon was 76 years old. He spent weekdays living with his wife in the city centre and weekends visiting his country cottage. Leon was the active at his local community-based seniors' club and heavily involved in varied sporting activities, especially hiking and mountaineering. At interview, Leon said that he

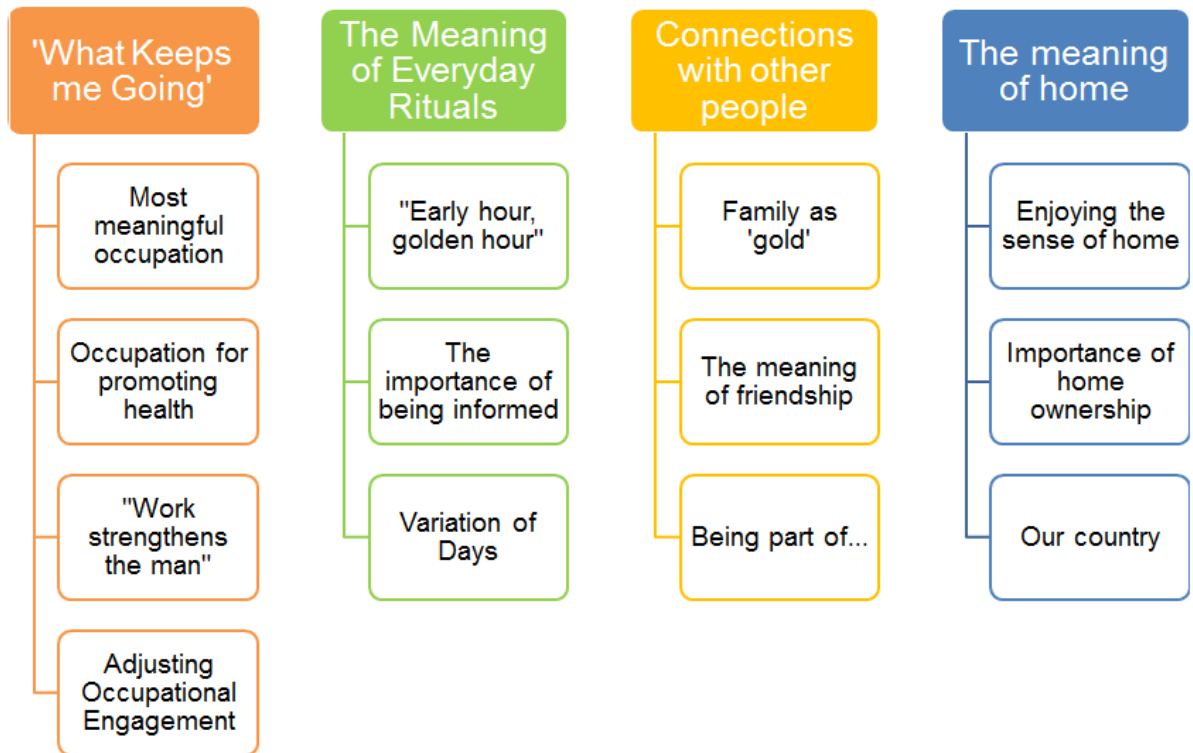
particularly enjoyed the physicality and competitiveness of his chosen sporting activities, as well simultaneously being able to socialise with like-minded friends. Having previously experienced back problems, Leon saw hiking as beneficial for his health.

'That feeling...I can't explain...the main purpose for me is actually walking [hiking], to get there, to feel good and just the other day when we went I said my back doesn't hurt at all, that's great. And then when I came down to my car [from the mountain]...my back started to hurt again...I said as soon as I stop walking, it hurts again.' (Leon, 582-586)

Leon had climbed mountains throughout the world, in his younger days; an achievement of which he was duly proud. Given this, Leon felt confident and competent to organise hiking trips; one of his roles in his local seniors' association. He felt great responsibility for those participating in these trips, however. Leon tried to be modest about his achievements, but enjoyed the other hikers' admiration of his organisational skills. Leon's uncompromising schedule of regular daily and weekly occupations further suggested the importance to him of his organisational skills and sense of responsibility.

3.4.1 Findings across cases – Stage 1

FIGURE 1: *Master themes with subthemes*



Master themes with subthemes (Figure 1) were developed by looking across the data from all ten participants; focusing on the divergence and convergence of their experiences. Four themes were developed: 'What keeps me going', The meaning of everyday rituals, Connections with other people, and The meaning of home. These themes aim to enhance understanding of occupational engagement in ten older Slovenians, including the meaningfulness of their chosen occupations. In the following section, themes and subthemes will be discussed together with the researcher's interpretations; supported by participants' quotes.

3.4.1.1 Master Theme: 'What keeps me going'

FIGURE 2: *'What keeps me going'*



The interviews showed that the ageing process had brought changes to all participants' everyday lives; including their occupational engagement. When talking about what motivated them, in their lives, all referred to what they enjoyed doing. They all cited particular occupations that were the most important to them and gave them meaning as important parts of their identity. Some participants also perceived health benefits from engaging in these meaningful occupations. Participants considered health as their principal value, with most engaging purposefully in health-promoting occupations as a

significant part of their everyday routines. A sense of productivity was seen as vital to maintaining health and well-being; a link that some participants illustrated by using a well-known Slovenian proverb '*Work strengthens the man*'. Although some participants acknowledged that they had had to adjust their occupational engagement, they were proud of the compensatory strategies that had enabled them to maintain their engagement in personally meaningful occupations.

Most meaningful occupation

Participants' everyday experiences of engagement in occupation showed they all were able to identify occupations that were most meaningful for them. Often, these were lifelong occupations that they had begun as children. For example, Kristina's most meaningful occupation focused on her regular theatre visits.

'I think it's in my genes. My father was like that... and his two sisters were always taking me to the theatre on Sundays when I was 3 or 4 years old. I remember being at the Opera house and I saw a play called "The White Horse" or something like that...and "Under this green hill", they weren't great Traviatas, but lovely.' (Kristina, 465-469)

Kristina was proud of her early engagement in cultural activities and of the cultural knowledge that she had developed later in life. She illustrated this by mentioning frequently a range of well-known plays and naming artists and directors, including some that she knew personally. In the past, play-going was seen as the preserve of educated and upper class people; perhaps suggesting that Kristina saw herself belonging to this social class. Other participants had started to engage in their most meaningful occupations when they were even

younger. Such continuous occupational engagement perhaps contributed to the meanings that participants attached to their chosen occupations.

Outdoor occupations, such as gardening, walking and hiking were seen as the most meaningful by the majority of study participants; perhaps reflecting the study's Slovenian context. For example, Tone, Meta, Mitja and Lidija all enjoyed gardening, although they gave different meanings to it. While Mitja and Lidija emphasised the health benefits of physical activity, whilst gardening, Tone and Meta enjoyed being out in their gardens and seeing the end results of their work. As Tone explained:

'I particularly enjoy taking care of fruit trees, because we had lots of fruit trees at home. My father taught me a lot, also how to propagate trees and I just propagated peaches this year. I tried to do the same with wild plums, and then I observe them...did I do well or not....?'

R: And how do you feel when you do that?

'Really good. I forget about everything. I even forget the things I should do but I don't because I'm out [in the garden].' (Tone, 206-212)

The above quote showed that, although Tone found it important to continue his father's tradition of propagating trees, gardening's value reflected more than just carrying on a family tradition. Instead, Tone enjoyed the process of creating new things and its accompanying sense of immersion and satisfaction. This satisfaction was also evident in Tone's lifelong engagement in joinery and his ongoing exploration of new gardening methods.

Some participants perceived their professions, or paid work, as their most meaningful occupations. For example, Rozi had been a farmer for as long as

she could remember, emphasising she has been a farmer's daughter and had married a farmer. Her life was built around these roles and her most meaningful occupations predominantly associated with farming life. In similar fashion, Robert acknowledged that his role as an orthopaedic surgeon provided him with his greatest life satisfaction.

'I know that, due to age, they can prevent you from working. But I think I would feel very, very, very miserable. And every doctor knows that...I know my colleagues who are retired and they still work and so on. I think that as long as you can work...as long as you feel you can work, they should allow us to work, you know.' (Robert, 137-141)

Although Robert was using the term 'work', he was referring to occupations related to his medical practice and his role as a doctor, which had become an important part of his identity. He saw the possibility of ceasing his professional practice as detrimental; going on to generalise this perception to medicine as a whole. His words could be also interpreted as voicing fear for a time when he might no longer be able to practice medicine.

In contrast, other participants appeared more contemplative, noting that they had become less occupationally active; a situation which they attributed to getting older. For example, Jera enjoyed her regular walks outdoors but emphasised her preference for walking alone, which enabled her to reflect and to reminisce. Similarly, Leon emphasised that, in recent years, he had become more selective; choosing to engage only in occupations that he enjoyed.

'This is how it is... I retired after my illness and I decided that I will spend the rest of my life doing what I really enjoy doing.' (Leon, 835-836)

Leon's words suggest that, in the past he had often had to adjust his occupations to match his different life circumstances, but that he had now decided not to do this anymore. In particular, facing a life-threatening travel-related infection had made him realise what he really valued in life and the ways in which he now wanted to spend his retirement. Only one participant, Peter, had started to disengage from what he had previously enjoyed doing, presumably because traveling and photography had been occupations that he had shared with his late wife. As his wife had died only recently, Peter's occupational disengagement could have been a temporary reaction to the bereavement process.

Occupation for promoting health

Although all participants were still living independently in their own homes, they all cited keeping healthy as one of their most important occupations. Most were incorporating health-promoting occupations into their everyday routines and felt proud to be doing so. Kristina, Lidija, Meta and Jera each spent their mornings engaging in physical activity which they saw as contributing to their health and independence. As Lidija explained:

'It's true, that's what strengthens me, that's why I go walking uphill. I go every day; I went today as well, for two hours, in the morning already. And that's what strengthens me. In the summer, I just go to pick up berries or mushrooms..... just so that I have some exercise. I cut the grass, I dig, I plant.... everything that needs to be done. So, I'm pretty active. All the neighbours think highly of me. They think highly of me..... and that is because.... You know here next door neighbour, he goes helping this other neighbour who's three years younger than

me, and another one is seven years younger and he does everything for them. And I do it all by myself.' (Lidija, 12-20)

Although Lidija perceived gardening as meaningful and contributing to her health, she also chose to go hiking, to gain additional health benefits. The above quote also suggests that comparing herself favourably to others who were of a similar age, or younger, further motivated Lidija to stay active. It seems that Lidija's pride in her physical ability, and an element of competitiveness, also contributed to her high level of occupational engagement. Meta and Leon also noted that people had asked them about their ages; and that others people's admiration further motivated their health-promoting activities.

Leon, Robert and Mitja also regularly engaged in sport, which they considered health promoting. For example, Robert, who was a doctor, expressed his certainty about the benefits of regular physical activity.

'No doubt, for instance, if we play golf or tennis, I mean, or if we go skiing, that's the best thing for health..... And also, I can see my friends who are involved in different sports or physical activity, they actually look better, they are healthier.' (Robert, 227-229)

The above quote indicates that Robert's opinion was more than just a personal one. Instead, he placed himself as an expert; further highlighting the importance of his professional identity as a doctor.

'Work strengthens the man'

The above Slovenian proverb is used as a title for this subtheme because it illustrates participants' perceptions of the importance of work. Some participants even quoted the proverb directly at interview. All participants valued their engagement in productive occupations, which they saw as giving them a sense of purpose and increasing their resilience to the challenges of old age. While most participants had retired from paid employment, they all kept to their regular working routines. The latter, which may have previously been seen as obligatory, had since become some of participants' most meaningful occupations. For example, Meta enjoyed working in her garden, explaining:

'She said [one of her neighbours]: but you're putting so much effort in it, so much effort. And I said...it's not an effort, I enjoy doing it [working in the garden]. I enjoy working and every evening I thank God for everything I did today, that I had the strength to do it. And in the morning I thank God for the night and ask him to keep giving me this strength for a while.' (Meta, 330-334)

The above quote highlights Meta's belief that her ability to work indicated her health and well-being; abilities that she prayed to maintain for as long as possible. Similarly, Rozi perceived her daily farm work as strength-giving; illustrating the link with the above Slovenian proverb.

'Work strengthens the man. Ha, ha, ha...if you work, you're stronger, if you don't, you're for no use...if you would just lie around....when I won't be able to work...that's when it'll be really hard. (Rozi, 885-887)

Rozi's words could be seen as judgemental, with regard to people who were less active and productive than she was herself. The same sentiment was also

expressed by other participants. This may be due to the fundamental value of work, bequeathed to Slovenian society by its recent Socialist history. For example, when Mitja considered that ceasing to drive would one day stop him from visiting his weekend home, he saw maintaining a sense of productivity as a satisfactory replacement.

'I'm not bothered too much. I'll dedicate more time to walking...and I won't be working in the garden. I'm not bothered...I'll find work, I have...I always find something to do. I'm never bored.' (Mitja, 799-801)

Mitja's words could be seen as suggesting that what was important to him was not the nature of his occupational engagement, but the fact that he could maintain his sense of productivity. Robert also acknowledged the importance of work in general, although he indirectly referred to the value of his professional work.

'I just love work. And I think it's very important that even when you're old; that you remain active and that you have certain responsibilities. Responsibilities related to time.' (Robert, 238-240)

In acknowledging the role of time, Robert appeared to refer to his professional responsibilities, rather than solely maintaining a sense of productivity. His regular engagement in work, and the temporal aspect of this, represented an important part of his usual routine and a significant part of his identity.

Adjusting Occupational Engagement

Some participants in this study reported the need to adjust their occupational engagement, over time, to compensate for the decreasing abilities that came

with old age. None expressed irritation at this situation, however; voicing pride they had been able to find their own solutions. For example, Kristina carefully developed strategies in advance to manage her ongoing trips to the city centre.

'I take a taxi to Drama (Slovenian National Theatre)...because I'm able to walk from there...I can walk that much. Otherwise you know if I go to the city centre I always think about where are the places to rest and to sit down...and I have some ice-cream or a cup of coffee. When I'm in the centre I like window-shopping as well, so that I know things. And then they say where did you see that? And I say...when I passed that shop...' (Kristina, 253-258)

Although she had to rest, whilst she was walking around the city centre, Kristina had turned this necessity into a pleasurable experience. Her determination to make her everyday life as meaningful as possible, despite any necessary adjustments, was reflected throughout her interview. The above quote also highlighted Kristina's desire to stay up-to-date and knowledgeable; resulting in admiration and praise from her. Her friends' reactions appeared to contribute to Kristina's determination to continue to pursue her chosen activities for as long as possible.

The importance of being praised and admired by other people was also reported by Lidija and Meta. Both women noted that they had to take regular rests, whilst gardening, but neither complained about this adjustment. In contrast, Jera was less pleased that she had to replace her regular outdoor walks with indoor exercise bike sessions during the winter. As she explained:

'I have an exercise bike, but I feel like it's not working for me...even if during the winter when I can't [go walking outdoors]...I do use it then, but I prefer going out...I don't know, don't know...it's just not for me. I feel that when I look

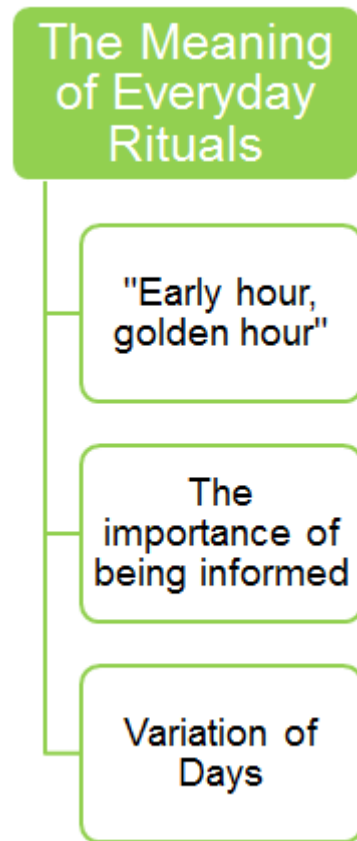
around...I don't know, the energy outdoors is completely different. I see this and that...a completely different mood.' (Jera, 289-293)

The above quote suggests that Jera obtained more from her outdoor walks than from regular physical activity, noting that being surrounded by nature brightened her up and gave her a sense of comfort which she did not experience indoors.

Life-long sportsmen Michael, Leon and Robert reported that they often measured the frequency or extent of their occupational engagement. For example, Leon reported using a stopwatch when he was hiking and measuring his walking speed when going uphill, rather than stopping to admire the view. Similarly, Robert counted the number of days that he had been skiing during the winter. These accounts could suggest that these participants were trying to maintain a constant level of engagement over time or that they sought to make their chosen activities more challenging than before, in order to increase their physical strength and/or vitality.

3.4.1.2 Master Theme: The meaning of everyday rituals

FIGURE 3: *The meaning of everyday rituals*



All of the participants in this study highlighted the importance of engaging in their regular daily occupations. These represented not just everyday routines for them, however, but were meaningful rituals. This point was clearly conveyed through participants' use of language and non-verbal communication. Early morning rituals were seen as especially important; relating to a Slovenian cultural link between early rising and hard work. Participants' awareness and knowledge of current national and foreign affairs was also seen as a significant daily occupation contributing to the meaningfulness of their days. In contrast,

participants enjoyed the differences between their days, although they preferred to plan these nuances in advance, which gave them a sense of predictability.

“Early hour, golden hour”

Participants indicated that morning rituals were the most important of their days. They particularly highlighted the value of getting up very early in the morning. This link could be specific to Slovenian culture, where rising early is awarded significant value; reflected in a well-known Slovenian proverb *“Early hour, golden hour”*. This proverb was consequently chosen as the title for this theme. The 8-hour working day, in formerly Socialist Yugoslavia, started at 6.00 or 7.00am. This was also the usual working day for the ten study participants. For example, Tone acknowledged the influence of working days on his everyday early morning routine:

‘Well,... in the morning when I get up, pretty early, I still feel like when I was still working... It seems I can’t give that up...’ (Tone, 11-12)

Tone’s emphasis on his inability to give up his early rising habit, suggested his pride in it. As noted earlier, early rising was also linked to hard work in Slovenia, and productivity was seen as one of the most important aspects of occupational engagement by study participants. As Mitja explained:

‘Well, usually...., because I really enjoy in the morning when it’s hot in the summer... I go watering my garden at 5am. I get up very early. Yes.... that’s my principle, I get up really early and I don’t go to bed too late.’ (Mitja, 159-161)

By stating that early rising was his *'principle'*, Mitja acknowledged that this formed a fundamental rule that he followed before engaging in his other daily occupations. Most study participants also emphasised the importance of an early start of their days. When Kristina explained that she generally awoke later in the day, she almost seemed to be apologising for it:

'...I don't get up very early, because I'm more of an evening type of person...I rarely go to bed before midnight and then in the morning I don't get up at 6, but between 7 and 8...it sometimes happens that even later...not often, but it happens. After that it's time for my morning ritual. When I'm still in bed I stretch my legs and arms, I do my exercise in bed. Then I get up and I meditate for 10 minutes. After I finish meditating...I take the time...I have this wonderful book "The opening of inner doors." In this book there are thoughts for 365 days and every day I read a thought for that day...and it's like guidance for that day.'
(Kristina, 8-15)

The above quote shows that Kristina's morning ritual was both consistent and carefully planned. Taking time for her chosen morning occupations prepared her for her day and gave her a sense of health and well-being. In similar fashion, Meta explained how she danced a little in her kitchen every morning; giving her strength for the rest of the day. Participants' engagement in their chosen morning rituals could reflect their retired status and a consequent abundance of time at their disposal. Their morning rituals may also have reassured participants that they had engaged in health-giving activities before going on to pursue their other daily responsibilities.

The importance of being informed

Another significant aspect of participants' daily routine was making sure that they stayed well-informed. Most participants emphasised that listening to the morning news on the radio, reading a newspaper or regularly watching the evening news were fundamental to their knowledge of about the world around them. These activities influenced participants' thinking; enabling them to have meaningful conversations with the people around them. Tone perceived his morning ritual of reading the newspaper as a vital start of his day:

'...then I walk to the post box and I pick up the newspaper...the newspaper is my daily informer, which I must read from start to finish. Then I make some coffee, my wife wakes up and after I finish the first part [of the newspaper], my wife would usually say...did you finish the first part yet?' (Tone, 12-15)

The above quote shows that an important aspect of this activity for Tone was sharing it with his wife. Reading the newspaper was also linked to other morning co-occupations, such as drinking coffee together and making plans for the day. In similar fashion, Kristina also enjoyed her morning ritual of reading the newspaper, noting that this also contributed to her planning of her day:

'Then I check the newspaper, I start at the back and see what's new. And then I come to the crossword which I like to fill in...usually, unless if I don't have the time to do it. And then I read the culture section and the TV schedule for the day if there's anything interesting on...' (Kristina, 45-48)

The elements of the newspaper that captured Kristina's interest reflected the nature of her meaningful occupations. For example, completing the newspaper crossword suggests that she saw herself as knowledgeable and educated. It

could also suggest that she sought to maintain her cognitive ability whenever she had the opportunity to do so. Kristina's most meaningful occupations were cultural, which is why she was interested in the culture-related news. Similarly, farmer Rozi emphasised that she regularly listened to the weather forecast; reflecting the weather's potential importance for her work and her crops.

'I always watch the news...and then my grandson says...gran, you're so curious...and I say...only because no one around here tells me anything [makes a joke]. And I find out everything there, all the news...at 7 o'clock news...I listen to the weather a lot...and the news...they all say I'm a politician ha, ha...' (Rozi, 316-320)

Rozi also regularly followed politics; expressing humorous pride in being considered a '*politician*' by her family. Ever since her husband had died, Rozi had successfully run the family farm; mostly alone. Her family's view of her as a '*politician*' seemed to reassure Rozi that they still saw her as in charge.

Variation of days

Participants' everyday routines gave an enjoyable sense of certainty and predictability to their lives. They also noted that every day was different, making their lives more diverse and flexible as a result. For example, although Kristina valued her morning planning of her day, she also enjoyed making each day meaningful by having varied activities from which to choose.

'I write down...I say aha, that's at 4pm, or there are no interesting shows today, or today is something interesting at 6. So over there I have like a timetable, I try to be organised as much as possible...And I try to make every day special. And then I see...sometimes I'm meeting someone, or I have visitors, or maybe I

meet someone for coffee, or I go to the shop...and that's what I think is important. You cannot allow your brain to stop working, and your legs as well....although it's hard sometimes...' (Kristina, 54-60)

The above quote shows that Kristina saw that having variety in her days enabled her to remain both physically and mentally active. Although she acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining the same level of occupational engagement, with advancing years, she believed that attempting to do so contributed to her health and well-being. Other participants had strict schedules for each day of their week. This was especially evident for Robert and Leon, each of whom followed a weekly sporting routine. For example, as Leon explained:

'...on Mondays I start in the morning with swimming, then I go to the office to do some admin work, and in the afternoon I have table tennis and that's how I end my sport day. On Tuesday,...again getting up, breakfast, 2 hours of tennis...working at home in the afternoon. Wednesday mornings at half past seven I have bowling, 120 throws...office after 10, free afternoon...' (Leon, 12-16)

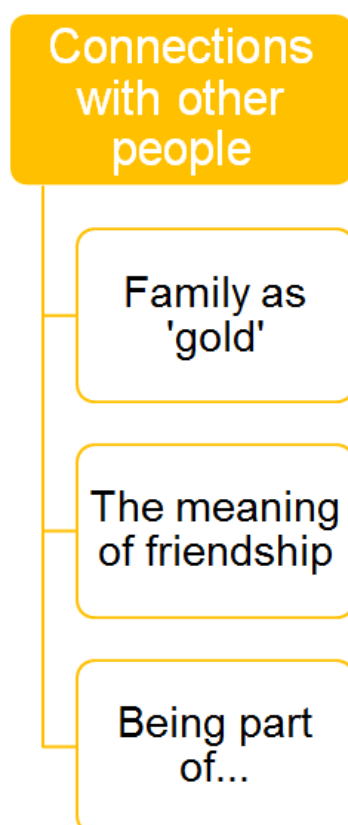
Leon was proud of the variety of his weekly sports activities and his high level of engagement; emphasising the amount of time spent and/or the number of throws made. His words also served to highlight his enjoyment of the competitive aspect of sport. In contrast, Peter enjoyed the days that he spent looking after his grandchildren, on a regular basis; valuing these days' relaxed pace and structure. He did not voice a need for constant activity, but instead enjoyed the chance to laze around or spend time in the company of people who made him feel good. For example, as he explained:

'On some days I go down town...and there we have 'čevapčnica' [a traditional Balkan place to eat] and there's this really friendly waitress there. They're from the South, don't know exactly from where [referring to southern ex-Yugoslavian republics], I never asked, but we have a nice communication....and usually eat 'čevapčiće' [traditional Balkan food] and a salad...then I smoke a cigarette and wait for my grandson to call.' (Peter, 49-54)

The above quote reflects the ease of Peter's 'some' days. Although the events described happened infrequently, it was evident that Peter found them a delight. His enjoyment of his interactions with the waitress may reflect the extent to which Peter missed women's company since the death of his wife. It is also possible that his delight is linked to a lack of perceived pressure to rush anywhere; enabling him to enjoy having the time to talk to the waitress, eat a delicious meal and/or smoke a cigarette.

3.4.1.3 Master Theme: Connections with other people

FIGURE 4: *Connections with other people*



All ten participants stated that other people played a vital role in their lives; especially valuing their regular contact with their families, most of which lived nearby. Participants also maintained regular social connections, at times with lifelong friends and at others with acquaintances who served as pleasant company, such as sports partners. Some participants' active involvement in varied clubs or associations constituted an important part of their everyday occupational engagement.

Family as 'gold'

Maintaining good relationships with their families, and spending time with them, were an important occupation for most study participants. All participants reported strong relationships with their children and grandchildren; due to their close physical proximity. For example, as Rozi noted:

'Family means everything to me...I usually say it's like gold...children are the gold of every house. I don't care for gold...I have diamond earrings I don't even wear them...I don't care for that. It doesn't mean a thing to me....Yes, yes...I'm so happy they love me. They run into my arms...ha, ha, ha...' (Rozi, 935-938)

Rozi felt proud of the well-established relationship that she had with her children and grandchildren, which was also reflected in their regular help on the family farm. By comparing them to gold, Rosi sought to emphasise the value that she placed upon them. Rosi's comments could also illustrate the vital part played by successive generations in the continuity of family farm work.

Other participants also emphasised that they spent much of their free time with their families, especially at weekends and holiday times. Some participants

found it challenging to spend regular amounts of time with their families, however. For example, Robert expressed feels of guilt that he did not spend more time with his grandchildren.

'Grandchildren mean a lot to me. I have five grandchildren and I spend time with them, and I think that represents an important occupation...although I feel guilty, that I don't spend enough time with them.' (Robert, 29-31)

Robert, who was still working as a doctor, sometimes found it difficult to maintain a balance between his work and his other occupations. His feelings of guilt might also be linked to Slovenian cultural expectations that grandparents are usually much involved in their children's lives. This is especially the case if the generations share a house; a link that is perhaps specific to the Slovenian context. For example, Peter's daughter and son-in-law built their house next to his to enable Peter to look after their children. Although Peter enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, he sometimes felt overwhelmed by it. Similarly Jera, whose daughter moved in with her after her divorce, felt that she would organise her day differently if she lived alone.

'It's an obligation you know...for example cooking...if I was alone, I wouldn't cook as much. I wouldn't make three course lunches [main daily meal in Slovenia], the way I do now when my daughter comes home. She usually has lunch with me. If I was alone...I don't know, I probably wouldn't bother so much...what's the point? I would make it simple. If I'm ever alone I usually make one dish, nothing special, but now that she's around...I have to.' (Jera, 260-265)

Although Jera enjoyed having her daughter nearby, she felt obliged to undertake some activities more often than she would otherwise have done, in

order to match her daughter's lifestyle. Such occupations as making her daughter's lunch might also have reminded Jera of previous relationship patterns from her daughter's younger days.

The meaning of friendship

Most participants noted that they maintained life-long friendships founded on shared interests and activities. For example, Meta regularly spent time with two friends who shared her passion for flowers and gardening, Kristina joined friends to visit the theatre and Jera's friend accompanied her on her daily walks. In similar fashion, Mitja reported that he and his wife shared celebrations and/or regular walking trips with a group of other couples.

'... we [with his wife] spend a lot of time with this group...celebrating birthdays, sometimes go to exhibitions, or city trips...We published a booklet 10 years ago [showing me the booklet]...short introduction, and then three photos for each year...this was our first trip. We will again make it for 10 years and summarise the rest...because we've also included exactly where we walked, who was who...the names....sometimes we took grandchildren with us or some other friends, but those weren't our "formal" walkers ha, ha, ha...' (Mitja, 210-216)

The above quote suggests that the social activities described held varied meanings for Mitja; enabling him not only to socialise, and thereby to maintain his life-long friendships, but also to do so alongside of his wife. On occasions, Mitja noted that he also acted as group organiser, proudly raising the significant contribution that he had made to a group throughout the interview. Although this group was not formal, Mitja differentiated between those of his friends who regularly joined the group walking trips and others.

Although all participants engaged in regular social activities, they also faced losing their life-long friends due to ill-health or death. For example, Leon explained that some of his hiking companions had had to interrupt their regular weekly hiking trips due to ill-health. Similarly, Tone explained that two friends who shared his interest in joinery had died.

'My age [friends],... some of them died, there were two in our street, both joiners as well, we were very close. Otherwise I go to XXX [nearby town], to the supermarket and there's a meeting place. There's a small coffee shop where we go for a cup of coffee, and we talk about different events, we discuss politics sometimes...'(Tone, 309-313)

The above quote shows that Tone had tried to find like-minded people with whom to talk. Peter also explained he conversed with other older people when he took his grand-daughter swimming.

'So, at the swimming pool I meet people of my age, two men and a woman, and we discuss different "unimportant" things.' (Peter, 118-119)

Both Tone and Peter clearly sought and valued these conversations. By saying that he had been discussing *'unimportant'* things, Peter highlighted the importance of informal conversation, rather than demanding intellectual debate. The importance that Tone and Peter ascribed to these casual social interactions might also suggest that they felt lonely.

Being part of...

Most participants belonged to different clubs and associations; giving them a sense of belonging and enabling them to contribute to their local communities. Leon, Robert and Mitja all held key positions within their chosen organisations, suggesting that they particularly valued such membership. As Leon explained:

'They soon realised I'm still capable of doing things...and they wanted me to become involved and now I run...I'm the president of the Committee for sport and recreation at the association..., the member of the committee for allocating funds, member of the [regional] committee for sport and recreation, and a member of the National committee for senior's sport and recreation. (Leon, 212-216)

Leon spent much of his time at his local Seniors' Association; holding several different formal roles. His involvement might suggest that he valued the status conferred; an important aspect of Slovenia's previous communist political system. The interview also showed that he enjoyed these roles and occupations, at the same time as enjoying the status.

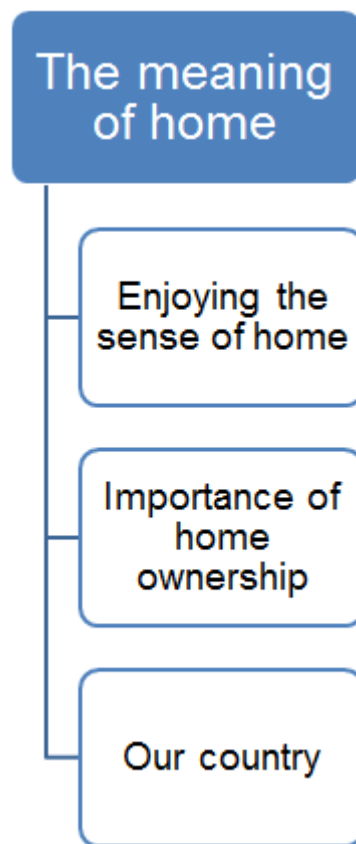
Other participants enjoyed their club membership solely for the socialising opportunities offered. For example, both Meta and Jera valued the regular monthly trips organised by their local Seniors' clubs. As Jera explained:

'We chat a little...we visit museums and churches...sometimes we go hiking....or swimming...different things. Mostly same people...sometimes we get a new member or some people leave but mostly the same people. As soon as I retired I joined. And it wasn't so much fun at the beginning; it's much more fun now.' (Jera, 483-487)

Jera's quote shows that she especially valued spending time with familiar people. It also suggests that Jera took some time to begin enjoying the activities on offer.

3.4.1.4 Master Theme: The meaning of home

FIGURE 5: *The meaning of home*



Participants' occupational engagement was linked to their enjoyment of their home environments; the latter offering both a sense of comfort and safety. All participants owned their homes and most had even built them; a standard practice under the previous socialist system. Several participants expressed patriotic sentiments, at interview, closely linked to their occupational engagement.

Enjoying the sense of home

Although most participants did not express an overt attachment to their home environment, several interviews suggested such a link. For example, Kristina described the nature of her daily afternoon rest:

'I wash the dishes and then I take a short rest. In the summer time, I love to go to the balcony and enjoy...it's interesting, I prefer lying on the floor, I don't sit. I unfold the blanket and I have my own balcony beach...and I also do a bit of snoring...ha, ha, ha...' (Kristina, 124-127)

Kristina described this summer ritual in a vivid manner, reflecting her feelings of comfort while enjoying her balcony. Her use of the term *'my balcony beach'* suggests that she valued her imagined beach more than the opportunity to visit a real one. The familiarity of her home environment enabled her to master her daily occupations, including her afternoon rest.

In contrast, Lidija and Meta expressed their affection for their homes in the context of their daily occupations. They both valued productivity and enjoyed being busy in and around their homes. As Meta noted:

'I like doing everything...cleaning...I'm so happy...washing the windows...I like doing everything...in my own home...I don't know how to explain this. Everything, absolutely everything...I'm really enjoying my home.' (Meta, 613-615)

The above quote shows that it was not only the productive occupations that Meta valued; enjoying everything about being the activities undertaken at home.

Her repeated use of the term *'my home'* also suggests a degree of pride that she and her husband had built their house; thereby creating a home for their family.

Importance of home ownership

Several study participants raised the meaning of their home ownership, perhaps reflecting Slovenia's previously socialist system, which enabled working-class people to build their own homes. For example, as Lidija said:

'We all left our home [she and her siblings] and all nine of us have our own houses...all nine of us...(Lidija, 127-128)

The above quote highlights the importance to Lidija that she and her eight siblings had all been able to build properties. This sentiment may also reflect older Slovenians' common comparison of quality of life under the previous socialist system with the current economic situation. Whilst Lidija and her siblings had all been able to build their own homes, financial stringencies force most modern young Slovenians to live with their parents or to rent. Older Slovenians sometimes perceive this situation as a systemic failure.

Meta has also been excited about moving into her new home, several decades previously, as the move had enabled her to take up gardening.

'I started gardening when we started building the house. And that was...how many years was that,...we were 25 years old when we got married, 35 when we started [building], and then we were here on our own. Oooooo, how much I enjoyed that.' (Meta, 440-443)

Meta's quote also shows that she and her family had stayed in the same house for all of the intervening years; a common occurrence in Slovenia. This might reflect the fact that having built their homes people were attached to them strongly. The fact that most older Slovenian houses are big enough for two families also provides a convenient solution to current younger generations.

Our country

Several study participants also expressed appreciation for their home country in describing their occupational engagement. For example, as Mitja explained:

'I was mountain-climbing more in the past, and I also visited some high mountains, I'll say....Slovenian mountains...from Triglav, Ojstrica and Jalovec and all that.' (Mitja, 101-103)

By emphasising '*Slovenian mountains*' Mitja suggested his special attachment to the peaks concerned. He also drew attention to the value of his achievements, since the mountains mentioned are Slovenia's highest. Similarly, Peter who had spent most of his life travelling around the world, expressed his affection for Slovenia by saying:

'We have so many rich lyrics, richer than that from world known interprets. ...Yes, I enjoy here. I've seen so much of the world, that I know we have a paradise here.' (Peter, 1080-1082)

Several participants voiced distress about current political affairs, highlighting their concern for the future of their country, their children and their

grandchildren. For example, Tone's ongoing interest in politics led him to comment:

'My favourite part [in the newspaper] is the first part...the politics...current politics which is very intense...you sometimes wonder if the nation will be able to cope throughout these times...it's hard. But even so...Slovenian people are strong and they are resilient because they had to survive in the past...' (Tone, 17-20)

Tone's interest in current political matters informed his thoughts, as well as his daily conversations with his family and friends. His perception of Slovenian people suggested a strong sense of patriotism.

3.4.2 Summary of findings

The above findings show the significance, for one group of older Slovenians, of engaging in occupations with personal meaning. Such occupations gave them a sense of health and resilience in old age. This was enhanced by purposefully engaging in health-promoting activities and by adjusting the nature of these activities as necessary. Study participants also highlighted the significance of particular daily or weekly rituals and routines, some of them being specific to the Slovenian socio-cultural context. Spending time with their families was an important aspect of the participants' lives, with most maintaining close relationships with their children and grandchildren. This sometimes resulted in feeling overwhelmed with the intensity and/or frequency of these family engagements. Finally, participants described the significance of their sense of home; closely linked to home ownership and a sense of patriotism.

3.5 Discussion of findings – Stage 1

The first stage of this research explored Slovenian older people's experiences of occupational engagement, with a particular focus on their meaningful occupations. The participants' accounts highlighted that they all engaged in a variety of occupations and routines that shaped their everyday lives; emphasising that their most meaningful occupations were an important part of their identities. Participants' individual experiences of occupational engagement, together with the existing literature are now discussed.

3.5.1 Occupation and identity

All participants described occupations that were particularly meaningful and which shaped who they were as people. For example, one participant, who was a dedicated gardener, said that gardening was '*her life*'. Another participant expressed the significance of going to the theatre by saying that this occupation was '*in her genes*'. A group of older adults from New Zealand also gave primary importance to one particular occupation in their everyday lives (Wright-St Clair, 2012). Christiansen (1999) proposed that people's unique identities were built through their occupations; enabling them to create meaningful lives. The social science literature defines identity at personal, relational, collective and material levels; reflecting the complexity of individuals' personal identities (Vignoles *et al.*, 2012). Discussions about the link between occupation and identity led to the concept of 'occupational identity' (Kielhofner, 2008, p. 106); defined as 'a composite sense of who one is and wishes to become, as an occupational being, generated from one's history of occupational participation'.

In the current research, participants reflected upon the significance of their occupational identities, with particular emphasis on their personally meaningful occupations. People maintain their identities throughout their lives through their experiences of meaning in occupation (Ikiugu, 2005). This meaning may be informed by people's personal values and choices (Hammell, 2001) and/or derived from their socio-cultural contexts (Hasselkus, 2011; Pierce, 2014). Hasselkuss (2011, p. 21) describes a reciprocal relationship between occupation and meaning; saying that 'meaning arises from occupation and occupation arises from meaning'. In the current research, some participants said that engaging in personally meaningful occupations gave them a sense of inexplicable enjoyment, relaxation and total immersion. For example, a participant who enjoyed propagating fruit trees in his garden explained that he forgot about everything else when engaged in this occupation. Some of these findings were similar to previous studies exploring older adults' engagement in meaningful occupations such as creative art (Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Reynolds, 2010; Liddle, Parkinson and Sibbritt, 2013) or leisure (Sellar and Boshoff, 2006). The current study indicated that participants' meaningful occupations resulted in the experiences of 'flow'; 'a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 4). Participants' experience of meaning contributed to this optimal experience; a significant factor when considering older people's occupational engagement (McHugh, 2016).

Although every individual's experiences of engaging in meaningful occupation is unique (Ikiugu, 2005, Hammell, 2004), this study found similarities in the

activities that participants prioritised and the meanings that they attached. It is likely that these similarities were based on participants' shared socio-cultural context. For example, participants perceived maintaining a sense of productivity, through paid or unpaid work, as significantly important. Although engagement in productive occupations was not the primary focus of this research, several participants perceived engaging in productive occupations as their most meaningful engagement; seeing it as contributing to their health and well-being. This may be specific to the Slovenian context, where work has always been considered a core value; with productive occupations dominating people's lives in the former Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) (Constitution SFRY, 1974). Only in 1965 did the concept of 'leisure' become a reality for Yugoslavians, with the Federal Labour Act's introduction of a 42-hour working week and work-free weekends (Grandits and Taylor, 2010). Although occupational identity theory suggests that individuals control the formation of their identities (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009), cultural groups may influence the construction of individuals' occupational identities (Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt, 2008). A Chinese study by Liang (2011) reported that past years and historical events played vital roles in shaping older adults' perceptions of a meaningful retirement; echoing the findings of the current research.

All of the participants in the current research described taking up their meaningful occupations in past years; with some even beginning in childhood. Although the interview questions did not focus on participants' past occupational engagement, they clearly found it important to share the history of their engagement in occupations that proved meaningful in later years. In this way, the past was seen to represent a foundation for their current occupational

engagement and well-being. The same link was reported by older adults in a study by Nilsson, Lundgren and Liliequist (2012). Ikiugu (2005) argued that it is continuity that makes engagement in a particular occupation meaningful. A sense of continuity between the past and the present has also been seen to contribute to people's sense of identity (Riley, 2008). Studies in which older people engaged in traditional occupations also linked such engagement to a continued sense of identity (Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013; Tzanidaki and Reynolds, 2011; Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong, 2002). Some of the current research participants described similar experiences, noting that occupations that they had been following since childhood had become embedded as part of their identities. Wilcock's dimension of 'becoming' (Wilcock, 2006; Wilcock and Hocking, 2015) suggests that continuous engagement in meaningful occupation had enabled participants to develop as occupational beings throughout their lives.

3.5.2 Occupation for health

The current study participants engaged purposefully in a range of health-promoting occupations; perhaps influenced by the media's promotion of the benefits of 'active ageing' (WHO, 2009). For example, most participants linked maintaining health with regular physical activity, such as a regular morning exercise routine or sport. This finding concurs with the findings of Stenner, McFarquhar and Bowling (2010) where a group of older British adults most commonly linked physical activity to active ageing. Several participants in the current study engaged regularly in sports activities; seeing these as a good way to overcome the challenges of old age. Similar findings were reported

elsewhere (Eman, 2012; Dionigi, Horton and Baker, 2013), with varied groups of older adults seeing sports activities as a way to change their perceptions of old age and negotiate the ageing process.

In the current research, all ten participants included elements of physical activity, in their everyday lives; seeing these as health-promoting. Occupations such as gardening, walking to the theatre, hiking and farming helped participants to remain physically active; an outcome of great significance to them all. Links between meaning and sustained physical activity, in older adults, has also been highlighted elsewhere (Janssen and Stube, 2014). In the context of health, people's experiences of meaning, through occupational engagement has been acknowledged as the key factor (Hasselkus, 2011). A randomised controlled trial by Clark *et al.* (1997, 2011) also found a link between meaningful occupation and older people's health and well-being. Several qualitative studies have echoed these findings, reporting feelings of health and well-being amongst older people engaged in personally meaningful occupations (Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong, 2002; Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Liddle, Parkinson and Sibbritt, 2013; McHugh, 2016). The Slovenian older adults who took part in this study also felt that engaging in productive occupations helped them to cope with current and future challenges of old age. Similar conclusions were reached by Reynolds, Farrow and Blank (2012), whose older adult participants also linked continuing to work to enhanced physical and mental health. These individuals highlighted the importance of having a regular obligation or responsibility; similar views to those expressed by some of the current study participants.

The current study participants also reported that they sometimes had to compensate for challenges such as fatigue or pain when they were engaging in their chosen activities. A study by Wright-St Claire, Kerse and Smythe (2011) found that the challenges that older adults experienced, during their occupational engagement, made them realise their age and declining abilities. In contrast, the ten older Slovenians interviewed in the current study expressed pride about their age, their ability to develop strategies to remain independent and their engagement in varied everyday occupations. For example, one participant was proud that she could continue gardening at her age, despite the need to take regular breaks. A further study, by Dunér and Nordström (2005), showed older adults developing different strategies, to adapt to their changing abilities; emphasising that independence meant keeping control over everyday activities, rather than doing them unaided. The theory of Selective Optimization with Compensation (Baltes and Baltes, 1990) states that older people act to optimise their general abilities and compensate for lost ones; concentrating on those domains of greatest importance to them. This was also the case with the participants in this study, who were content to adjust their occupational engagement in order to retain their most meaningful occupations. As previously noted, continuing to engage in meaningful occupation helps people to maintain their occupational identity (Ikiugu, 2005, Hasselkus, 2011), with older people using adaptive strategies to this end (Reynolds, 2010; Tatzert, van Nes and Jonsson, 2012).

3.5.3 Everyday routines and rituals

Participants highlighted the importance of routines in their everyday lives; taking time to explain the usual order of such daily or weekly occupations as reading a newspaper, undertaking exercises or following sport-related pursuits. Older people may use routines as adaptive strategies to help them to manage unfamiliar life challenges (Bouisson, 2002), maintain a sense of control and predictability (Bouisson and Swendsen, 2003) and master their everyday occupations (Hägglom-Kronlöf *et al.*, 2007; Larsson, Haglund and Hagberg, 2009). Studies investigating the temporal patterns of older people's daily occupations (Chilvers, Corr and Singlehurst, 2010; Björklund *et al.*, 2014) found that they spent more time engaged in routinized occupations. In the current study, all participants valued an early start to their days; a potential vestige of past times when they had gone to work. In former Yugoslavia, when the study participants would have been of working age, the working day usually began at six or seven in the morning (Lydall, 1984); a timeframe that still appeared to influence participants' current morning routines. A study of people going through the process of retirement highlighted that they adopted a slower pace of life, post-retirement (Jonsson, Borell and Sadlo, 2000). The participants in the current study kept to their morning routines, however, echoing the findings of work by Björklund *et al.* (2014), which highlighted that older adults organised their daily routines in the same ways as people of working age.

Participants' descriptions of their routines suggested that they perceived themselves as following not just a mere set of tasks, but a series of carefully planned and meaningful rituals. Although the two terms are often used

interchangeably within the literature, 'routines' usually represent instrumental aspects of engaging in occupation, while 'rituals' are symbolic and linked to people's emotions (Fiese, Foley and Spagnola, 2006; Hasselkus, 2011). For example, one of the current study participants described her morning ritual of dancing in her kitchen. This clearly served as a physical activity but, at the same time, reminded her of her son, who had been a musician and who had since died. Similarly, the way in which the older adults studied by Wright-St Claire, Kerse and Smythe (2011) described their everyday routines indicated that they ascribed deep meanings to these occupations.

Although the current research participants enjoyed having regular daily and weekly routines, they also valued a degree of variation between their different days. Older adults in a study by Wright-St Clair, Kerse and Smythe (2011) experienced their days holding different things but every day still being the same. In similar fashion, the current research participants reported that their days largely followed the same routines. To combat this, they took time to decide what they wanted to do, on given days, to achieve some diversity and variation. In contrast, Häggbloom-Kronlöf *et al.* (2007) found that the centenarian participants in their study experienced unexpected interruptions to their daily events as unpleasant. This disparity might reflect the difference in age between Häggbloom-Kronlöf and colleagues' participants and the older adults taking part in the current study, who were younger.

3.5.4 Connection with others

At interview, the current study participants often linked their meaningful occupations to specific people; echoing similar research findings from other studies (Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013; Lebar *et al.*, 2014; Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Liddle, Parkinson and Sibbritt, 2013; Tzanidaki and Reynolds, 2011; Aguilar *et al.*, 2010). Although occupational science and occupational therapy theory have been criticized for adopting a predominantly Western, individualistic perspective on human occupation (Hammell and Iwama, 2012; Hammell, 2014), occupation is increasingly being explored through concepts such as belonging, interdependence and interconnectedness (Kantartzis and Molineux, 2014; Hammell, 2014; Hammell and Iwama, 2012). A transactional perspective on occupation suggests that individuals maintain a close connection with their contexts through their occupational engagement (Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006).

In the current research, all participants kept close ongoing relationships with their families; as noted in previous Slovenian studies (Piškur *et al.*, 2002; Petrič in Zupančič, 2012; Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013; Lebar *et al.*, 2014). In order to maintain these relationships, the participants described engaging in such occupations as spending family celebrations, holidays and/or weekends together, as well as offering mutual help when needed. Similar reciprocal relationships were reported by older adults in a study by Bonder (2006) and Kantartzis and Molineux (2014), which indicated that sharing family events, in one Greek town, helped to maintain and reconfirm the family's identity. Older people are often involved closely in the lives of their children and grandchildren,

in Slovenia, because the generations commonly live near to one another or even share a house (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002). Some of the current study participants reported that they often looked after their grandchildren or prepared meals for their children's' families. Although participants generally enjoyed being involved in their children's' lives, in this way, some perceived these activities as an obligation that stopped them from engaging in more personally meaningful occupations. Similar findings were reported in a study by Menks Ludwig *et al.* (2007), where grandmothers' well-being was affected by having to provide care for their grandchildren. The participants in the current study did not complain about having to provide such care; seeing it as something that was simply expected of them. The latter could relate to the findings of Kantartzis and Molineux (2014), which highlighted that Greek older adults had to sometimes negotiate their personal needs with other family members, due to the family unit's cultural pre-eminence.

The current study participants also emphasised the value of sharing meaningful occupations with spouses and/or long-life friends. The concept of co-occupation; referring to two or more people engaging in an occupation together, has been discussed within the occupational science literature (Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow, 2009; van Nes *et al.*, 2012). Such sharing involves 'shared physicality', 'shared emotionality' and 'shared intentionality' (Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow, 2009, p. 151). A significant aspect of these co-occupations is the meaning shared by the people concerned (Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow, 2009). For example, one current study participant explained how he and his wife had a group of friends, with whom they regularly shared hiking trips, which included all three of the above co-occupation aspects. Engaging in this meaningful

occupation together enabled these participants to build new memories, share experiences and develop a sense of belonging. Similar outcomes were reported in a study by Nyman, Josephsson and Isaksson (2014) in which older adults generated meaning together through their shared experiences and culture. Individuals attach meanings to their occupations based on their connection with other people, promoting a sense of belonging (Wilcock, 2006, Hammell, 2014). The importance of belonging to both formal and informal activity groups was described by several of the current study participants; echoing the findings from previous Slovenian research (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002). Hammell (2014) linked this concept of belonging to the African concept of 'ubuntu'; meaning, 'I am human because I belong, I participate, I share' (Murithi, 2007, p. 281). The ten older Slovenian adults who took part in the current study appeared to share this perception; sharing their meaningful occupations with the significant people in their lives.

3.5.5 Belonging to a place

In the current study, participants linked their occupational engagement closely to their sense of 'home'; the latter meaning both their domestic environment and Slovenia. Environmental gerontology explores the relationship between older people and their physical and social environments (Lawton, 1982; Golant, 2015). In the current study, participants also said that their attachment to their home environment, which was closely related to their occupational engagement, gave them a sense of familiarity and enjoyment. Occupational science authors have also noted that the place in which occupation is conducted can be a source of meaning (Rowles, 2008; Heatwole Shank and

Cutchin, 2010; Hasselkus, 2011; Ikiugu and Pollard, 2015). In the current study, several participants described gardening as their most meaningful occupation. They linked their experience of gardening to their own home gardens, however, creating a sense of belonging to accustomed physical environments (Hitch, Pèpin and Stagnitti, 2014a). From the way that participants described their everyday activities, it was clear that these familiar places also gave them a sense of independence and autonomy. Although coming from a different socio-cultural context, older adults in a study by Haak *et al.* (2007) perceived their home environments as a prerequisite for maintaining their independence. Findings by Wiles *et al.* (2012) also indicated that older participants' home environments generated a sense of familiarity and identity, closely linked to independence and autonomy.

The older Slovenian adults who took part in the current study revealed their attachment to their homes by the ways that they described their everyday occupational engagement in these places. Having lived in their own homes for several decades, often the majority of their lives, led participants to attach myriad meanings to particular occupations (Heatwole Shank and Cutchin, 2010). In 2008, Rowles (2008, p. 129) wrote that 'the spaces of our life are given meaning as they are transformed into the places of our life'. This meaning is generated through people's occupational engagement (Heatwole Shank and Cutchin, 2010). The older Slovenians who took part in this study had often built their own houses; creating lasting family memories, a sense of home and ownership. Similar findings were reported by Wiles *et al.* (2009), with participants expressing attachment to their homes due to their sense of ownership and pride in having built the properties by themselves. In a further

study by Stones and Gullifer (2016), the older people who took part saw their homes as a connection between the past and the present; helping them to preserve their identities. Similar perceptions arose in the current study, where participants voiced their determination to stay in their own homes, despite such considerations as affordability and size; expressed by older adults elsewhere (Wiles *et al.*, 2009).

Current participants' professed attachments to their homes went beyond their own front doors to encompass their local geographical areas and wider nation; Slovenia. For example, most participants described outdoor occupations, such as gardening, hiking, farming, climbing mountains and skiing as their most meaningful; all of which are undertaken outdoors. The potential relationship between landscapes and activities has been addressed in the literature (Hudson *et al.*, 2011). The concept of 'occupationscape' has been derived to describe landscapes' formation through a history of human usage (Hudson *et al.*, 2011). The findings of the current study indicate that landscapes can, in turn, influence people's meaningful occupations.

Finally, participants linked some occupations to their national identity; for example, hiking or climbing in a particular Slovenian mountain range or reading Slovenian literature. Bloom (1990, p. 52) defined national identity as 'a condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols – have internalised the symbols of the nation – so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of enhancement of, these symbols of national identity'. For instance, one of the main Slovenian national symbols is the country's highest peak, Mount Triglav,

which features on the nation's flag. Given that Slovenia only became an independent country in 1991 (Pleskovič and Sachs, 1994), the national identity of Slovenian people might be expressed more, which was also reflected in the interviews with the participants of this research.

3.6 Conclusion

The first stage of this research enhances understanding of Slovenian older people's engagement in occupation, including their most meaningful occupations. The findings indicate the significance of continuous engagement in meaningful occupation across their lifespan, as part of participants' identities (Christiansen, 1999; Ikiugu, 2005). These occupations provided them with a sense of enjoyment and well-being, with some participants indicating a state of complete immersion, in the literature also described as 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Health-promoting occupations played an important role in these older Slovenians' daily lives and were mostly related to physical activity. The meanings that participants attached to their occupations and daily routines were influenced by their particular socio-cultural context and the places to which they felt they belonged. Some of the study findings were found to be unique to the Slovenian context, as a result. Such findings include the importance of family-related occupations and participants' attachment to their life-long living environments. These findings also provide a foundation for the second stage of this research, exploring how Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations might be influenced by their transition to living in a care home.

CHAPTER FOUR

Stage 2

Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations and transition into a care home

4.1 Introduction

The second stage of the current research aims to understand how individual older people's transition into a care home influenced their occupational engagement, including their engagement in meaningful occupations. The chapter gives an overview and critical discussion of the existing evidence, an overview of the methodology and methods used in Stage 2, findings and a discussion of findings.

4.2 Literature review – Stage 2

Reviewing the literature was an on-going process, seeking to provide an overview of the existing evidence on each of the given topics (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010) and to identify any gaps in order to present a rationale for the current study (Jesson, Matheson and Lacey, 2011). The following databases were searched in the second stage of this study, to identify research articles in English: CINAHL, MEDLINE, AMED and SocINDEX. The search terms used are shown in the table below (Table 6). These were combined using Boolean operators. A set of inclusion and exclusion criteria were also devised (Table 7), in order to elicit relevant research articles. After removing any duplicates, 651

research articles remained. Applying the study inclusion and exclusion criteria, and reviewing the abstracts, led to the selection of four of these articles. Two additional research articles were identified by hand-searching relevant journals and reference lists. Relevant Slovenian literature was identified using the COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services) database and by hand-searching relevant Slovenian journals. No publications were identified that explored Slovenian older people's occupational engagement linked to moving into a care home from these sources. Two Slovenian research articles were, however, identified that addressed older people's relocation into a care home from other perspectives. The decision was made to include these two articles, as they represented the only Slovenian evidence associated with the topic under research. Given the above, this part of the literature review included eight research articles (Table 8); indicating limited existing research evidence on the topic of interest.

Table 6: Search terms (Stage 2):

Older people OR	AND	Transition* OR	AND	Care home OR	AND	Occupation* OR	NOT Dementia
older adults OR elderly OR elders OR residents OR seniors		relocat* OR mov*		residential home OR residential care OR nursing home OR long term care		activity OR participation OR engagement	

Table 7: Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-reviewed research articles • Articles exploring the influence of transition into a care home on older people's engagement in occupations • English or Slovenian language • Research articles published between 2001 and 2016 • Participants aged 65 years or older • Participants in the process of transition into a care home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles including older people with a particular condition (e.g. dementia) • Articles published in other languages

Table 8: Literature search summary

Articles in English - identified through the above database search (n = 686)	Articles in English - identified through other sources, eligible for inclusion (n = 2)	Articles in Slovenian – identified through other sources, eligible for inclusion (n = 2)
After duplicates removed (n = 651)		
Articles eligible for inclusion (n = 4)	(n = 2)	(n = 2)
Total number of articles included in this study: 8		

All identified articles were critically appraised following the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative research (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2013). This enabled a critical evaluation of the quality of the research studies and consideration of their relevance to the second stage research objectives. This part of the literature review begins by introducing the

Slovenian literature, and continues with a critical discussion of the existing evidence on older people's occupational engagement linked to moving into a care home.

4.2.1 Slovenian older people and transition into a care home

The literature highlights that transitions are prompted by changes in people's lives (Brownie, Horstmanshof and Garbutt, 2014) which result in 'a process of convoluted passage during which people redefine their sense of self and redevelop self-agency' (Kralik, Visentin and van Loon, 2006, p. 321). Relocating to a care home is seen as a change, referring to the older person's move from one place of residence to another (Komatsu, Hamahata and Magilvy, 2007). It is also linked to the concept of transition; a psychological orientation and individual process that people go through at different speeds (Bridges, 2003).

The concept of transition has been explored from an occupational perspective, but most attention has focused on older people who are retiring (Jonsson, Josephsson and Kielhofner, 2001; Wiseman and Whiteford, 2009) or ceasing to drive (Vrkljan and Polgar, 2007). The current research seeks to understand the ways in which older people's occupational engagement might be influenced by the process of transition into a care home. The process of giving up a private home, to move into an institution, can impact upon older adults greatly; often reducing their autonomy and choices with regards to engaging in meaningful occupations (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008). Only limited literature has been identified on this topic (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Cutchin, Marshall and

Aldrich, 2010; Walker and McNamara, 2013), with no studies on Slovenian older people's occupational engagement during transition into a care home.

As noted above, two Slovenian studies were found that addressed older people's relocation to a care home from perspectives other than occupational engagement (Bračič, 2009; Kornhauser and Mali, 2013). The first was a quantitative study conducted by Bračič (2009). This study explored older people's reasons for relocating into a care home, with survey data from 65 of the 150 residents (37 women and 28 men) of one Slovenian care home. The results indicated that most participants had made their own decision to move. Their reasons differed by gender, with most men moving due to ill-health and most women moving due to loneliness. Although occupational engagement was not the focus of this study, one survey question asked respondents to choose in which of five leisure occupations they engaged, in the care home setting. For women, almost half reported enjoying organised arts and crafts activities (45%). For men, the most common activities were walking outdoors (25%) and attending cultural events (25%). It could be argued that the predetermined list of activities, presented to participants, did not allow them to identify occupations of personal value. The study's research process and data analysis were also poorly described, with only a descriptive summary expressed the results as percentages of the total survey sample (Walters and Freeman, 2010). In addition, the sampling process was questionable, as the researchers claimed to have selected their sample randomly, but later stated that they had only recruited those residents who had been able to answer their questions. Despite these limitations, this study did address Slovenian older people's relocation to a care home, reflecting the focus of the current research.

In the second Slovenian study identified above, social workers Kornhauser and Mali (2013) used a qualitative approach to explore the relocation experiences of ten residents of another Slovenian care home. The researchers' semi-structured interviews contained three sets of questions: exploring participants' lives before their relocation, the process of moving and their adaptation to care home living. The findings showed that most residents had been forced to move by sudden ill-health; often relocating directly from a hospital. Residents who had moved to the care home from their own homes did not recall any particular preparatory activities before their relocation. The latter indicates a limitation of this study. Kornhauser and Mali's (2013) expectations that residents would be able to reflect on and recount their relocation experiences at times went unmet, as some residents were unable to recall that period of their lives. The article also failed to note how long participants had lived in the care home. Some participants remembered worrying in advance about the nature of their daily activities once they had relocated. The findings of this study may be context-specific, in that all participants came from one area of rural Slovenia. In terms of participants' adjustment, after relocating, the findings mostly focus on residents' satisfaction with the care home's services. This account could have been improved by publishing more of participants' quotes, to give a better understanding of their individual experiences and to strengthen the credibility of the study findings (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Although participants mostly expressed satisfaction with their lives in the care home, the researchers' choice to name the home concerned is ethically questionable. Although several limitations have been identified with the above studies, they are the only Slovenian studies located that explore older people's move into a care home.

Whilst these findings are relevant to the current study, they indicate the need for further work in this research area.

4.2.2 Older people's occupational engagement and transition into a care home

Six studies were identified that explore older people's relocation into a long-term care facility and also address their occupational engagement (Hearle, Prince and Rees, 2005; Cipriani *et al.*, 2006; Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Cutchin, Marshall and Aldrich, 2010; Mulry, 2012; Walker and McNamara, 2013). The first study, by Cutchin, Marshall and Aldrich (2010) explored the role of occupation in the lives of 116 older Americans who moved into a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). This quantitative study used a questionnaire to examine respondents' participation in the set of 20 activities before and after their relocation. The results highlighted that, although respondents' overall levels of activity remained unaltered, their activity patterns changed during their transition. CCRC facilities provide independent housing, with assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, if needed. This environment offers more opportunities to engage in meaningful occupations than institutions such as care homes. The results also showed that the frequency of some activities increased (e.g. social and cultural activities) and others decreased (grocery shopping, housekeeping, communication activities). This longitudinal data set provide an insight into the way that individuals' occupational engagement may change as part of their adjustment to a new life phase. The study questionnaire offered only a predefined list of possible occupations however, potentially limiting the responses of participants engaged in other

meaningful activities. This study addressed older adults' transition from a home environment to a life care community in terms of their occupational engagement. The use of a longitudinal approach is similar to the current study, where data were collected before and after participants' care home admission. However, the current study focused on exploring the impact of transition into a care home on individual's experiences of occupational engagement.

A second pilot study used a mixed-methods approach to explore ten older Americans' experiences of moving into an assisted living facility, from an occupational perspective (Mulry, 2012). Four participants had relocated more than three years previously. Three others had moved more recently. This difference could be seen as a limitation, as some participants may not have remembered their relocation experience as well as others. In addition to semi-structured interviews, which the researchers used to capture participants' individual experiences, the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) (Law *et al.*, 2005) and RAND 36-Item Health Survey (Kinney LaPier, 2005) were also used as data collection methods. The COPM was originally developed to measure the quality of clients' occupational performance and satisfaction pre- and post-occupational therapy intervention (Law *et al.*, 2005). However, the tool was adapted for the purpose of this study to measure residents' self-perception of their role engagement and role maintenance, before and after their relocation. This change could be seen as a study limitation, as it potentially calls the outcome measure's validity into question. Despite the limitations acknowledged, this study indicated some importance with regards to older people's occupational engagement. It found that participants who had maintained their previous occupations and roles perceived

their adjustments to their new homes as more successful than other participants. The former also felt less frustrated when they experienced a lack of control over their daily routines; an issue of relevance to the current study.

In contrast, the findings of a third, Australian, study by Walker and McNamara (2013) highlighted that participants perceived their relocation to a retirement village as a chance to change their lifestyles and take up new activities. The researchers conducted qualitative interviews to explore 16 older adults' relocation experiences. Participants were at different stages of the relocation process, from decision-making to post-relocation adjustment. In principle, retirement villages aim to enable older people to remain independent and retain their previous lifestyles; unlike more institutionalised facilities. This difference may influence residents' occupational engagement experiences. Similarities exist between the findings of Walker and McNamara (2013) and those of Mulry (2012). Walker and McNamara (2013) also found that some of their participants sought to continue their previous daily routines and occupations; appreciating the chance to bring their possessions from their original homes with them. Having control over their decision to relocate was accorded significant importance in the success of their adjustment to their new living environment. Despite the relevance of its findings, this study had some limitations to address. A grounded theory approach was employed to analyse the study data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), but no apparent theory was generated; the purpose of grounded theory research (Creswell, 2013). Purposive and 'snowball' sampling were also used, instead of theoretical sampling, potentially leading to the selection of participants with similar experiences. In addition, it would have been helpful to follow participants throughout the transition period, instead of

choosing participants from each transition stage. Such issues indicate the need for longitudinal studies in this topic area.

Further research links older people's transition, following a care home move, to their perception of their relocation (Lee, Simpson and Froggatt, 2013). In a fourth study, which was also Australian, Marshall and Mackenzie (2008) explored 11 newly admitted hostel residents' adjustment to residential care. The researchers conducted interviews within six months of participants' hostel moves, taking a phenomenological approach to understand their individual experiences. Like Walker and McNamara's (2013) participants, Marshall and Mackenzie's (2008) respondents found it much easier to adjust to their new living environments if they could justify their decisions to move. The latter did not, however, place great importance on being involved in the actual decision-making process. Marshall and Mackenzie's (2008) respondents reported the importance, for them, of having some control, and of continuing to engage in meaningful occupations, even if the institutional environment restricted the latter. This finding may reflect hostels' provision of higher levels of care than those available to retirement village residents. Marshall and Mackenzie's (2008) participants also noted the perceived importance of being accepted by other residents, with some purposefully engaging in social activities to achieve this end. They reported that they had found it difficult to leave their original homes environment; with the ability to keep some of their personal possessions a significant factor in their adjustment to their new environment. This study is potentially limited by the fact that that only one interview was conducted with each participant, given that the adjustment process can be expected to last for a protracted period of time. Despite this, this study indicates clearly the need for a

longitudinal approach to older people's the decision-making and adjustment processes.

The fifth study was conducted by Hearle, Prince and Rees (2005) with a number of older adults living in a British residential care home. The researchers used a narrative approach and aimed to explore how the variety of life changes, including the move to a care home, had influenced older adults' occupational engagement. Although this study included a total of 14 participants, only four were living in a care home. Hearle and colleagues' findings showed that their community-dwelling participants engaged in a variety of occupations, but the care home residents felt restricted by their institution's orders and routines. This is a valuable insight in terms of the current study, which explores the influence of a care home move on older people's occupational engagement. Although Hearle and colleagues described their content analysis process appropriately, their findings focused on a comparison of the experiences of participants in different living conditions, rather than exploring the impact of their life transitions on their occupational engagement; thereby bringing the researchers' study aim into question. Collecting retrospective data may also result in recall bias (Mathews *et al.*, 2012). In addition, Hearle and colleagues discussed their findings in relation to the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2008), potentially influencing their data analysis process. Despite these limitations, this study also indicates the need for further research in this area.

Older people may experience a range of occupations as meaningful (Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong, 2002; Aguilar *et al.*, 2010; Tzanidaki and Reynolds, 2011). The final study by Cipriani *et al.* (2006) explored patterns of

altruistic activity amongst 11 older Americans living in two care homes. The researchers used the Activity Card Sort (ACS) (Baum and Edwards, 2001) alongside semi-structured interviews to identify participants' occupational patterns, including their altruistic activities, before and after their relocation into a care home. The findings showed that most participants had lost or changed their previous altruistic engagement, although two had managed to develop new occupations of an altruistic nature. This study's findings are relevant to the current research, as they show that particular types of occupation may be more susceptible to continuation, or discontinuation, after a care home move. Although Cipriani *et al.* (2006) described their research process clearly; their use of the ACS could be seen as a limitation, as the predetermined range of occupations presented may not have included activities that participants would have found personally meaningful.

In summary, the above studies highlight that older people's relocation into a care home has the potential to influence their occupational engagement. They support the need for longitudinal research, encompassing the different stages of this transition, in order to explore its impact on older people's engagement in occupation. The duration of this transition differs, for each individual, making it difficult to define (Bridges, 2003). A longitudinal study would collect data at different time points, providing an insight into older people's occupational engagement before their relocation and whilst they adjust to their new living environments. Only six studies were identified, worldwide, that explored the occupational aspect of older people making the transition to care home living, with no Slovenian studies found on the topic. This outcome indicates the need for the current research, which seeks to provide new evidence on the impact of

this transition on older people's engagement in meaningful occupations in a specific socio-cultural context.

4.3 Methodology and methods – Stage 2

Stage 2 of this research explored the ways in which making the transition into a care home influenced older Slovenians' experiences of engaging in personally meaningful occupations. As in Stage 1, Stage 2 used interpretative phenomenology (Heidegger, 1953; Gadamer, 1990) as its philosophical orientation, and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) as its research methodology and data analysis method. As the philosophical underpinnings of IPA have already been considered (see Chapters 2 and 3), this material will not be repeated. The research methods employed in Stage 2 of this research also echoed many of those used in Stage 1. Again, this material will not be discussed in detail. Given the above, the following paragraphs will explain the Stage 2 research methods, including recruitment, data collection and data analysis, where these processes differ from their counterparts in Stage 1.

4.3.1 Study sample and participant recruitment – Stage 2

For the purpose of Stage 2, a new group of older Slovenian adults was recruited; all six of whom were awaiting entry to a care home. Stage 2 explored the ways in which this transition influenced participants' engagement in personally meaningful occupations; interviewing them before their relocation, and then one month and six months after the relocation. In Slovenia, social

workers are usually the first point of contact for older adults considering moving into care homes (Kornhauser and Mali, 2013). With this in mind, a social worker of one Slovenian care home was contacted, asking that she forwards an information letter on to potential Stage 2 research participants (Appendix H). The care home, which had the capacity to accommodate 300-500 residents, was located in an urban area. As Slovenia is small, with only two million inhabitants, no further description of this home will be given, in order to maintain the confidentiality of this setting.

The Stage 2 inclusion criteria specified that participants be aged 75+ years, based on the fact that most care home residents in Slovenia are at least 75 years old (Republic of Slovenia Statistical Office, 2010b). Participants were also required to be in the process of transition into a care home, but still currently living independently in their own home environments. This decision was based on the fact that most existing studies in this area have either explored individuals' occupational engagement during the transition period retrospectively (Hearle, Prince and Rees, 2005), or have focused on the adjustment process (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Mulry, 2012). The current study's use of phenomenology as its philosophical underpinning, made it important to capture participants' 'lived experience' (Finlay, 2011) of occupational engagement, throughout this transition, at different time points.

In Slovenia, some older adults decide to move into care homes when they are still well and living independently in their own homes. This decision is sometimes taken as a preventive measure, due to the country's paucity of non-institutional living solutions, while they are still able to look after themselves

(Hvalič Touzery, 2007). This situation informed the researcher's decision to exclude older adults who had cognitive impairments and communication issues, considering the fact that older people with cognitive issues would not be living independently in the community and those with communication issues might have difficulties elaborating on their experiences of occupational engagement. Instead, the research aimed to explore occupational engagement, throughout participants' transition into a care home, in older adults who were still actively engaged in varied occupations in their home and local communities.

The social worker who served as a 'gatekeeper' forwarded the information letter about the research to potential participants (Appendix I) by using her professional judgement to decide whether individuals met the study inclusion and exclusion criteria. The Stage 2 recruitment process took longer than anticipated, as several would-be participants proved to have cognitive limitations. Six Slovenian older adults (three women and three men) (Table 9), waiting to relocate into a care home and meeting the inclusion criteria consented to participate. These people permitted the social worker, noted above, to forward their contact details to the current researcher; enabling her to contact them to schedule their first interviews. Although the researcher aimed to conduct her first interviews whilst participants were still living in their own homes, this only proved possible for four people. At the time of their first interviews, one participant was temporarily in hospital and the other had arrived in the care home two days previously.

Table 9: Participant Information – Stage 2

Participants	Age	Gender	Living situation – 1 st interview	Living situation - 2nd interview	Living situation - 3rd interview
Janez	92	M	- lives independently in a flat, widower	In a care home Single room, shared bathroom	In a care home Single room, shared bathroom
Bor	82	M	- lives independently in a house, married	In a care home Single room	In a care home Single room
Miha	90	M	- 2 nd day in a care home, previously lived independently in a house, widower	In a care home Single room, shared bathroom	In a care home Single room, shared bathroom
Dora	90	F	- lives independently in a house, single	In a care home Double room (sharing room)	In a care home Single room
Jelka	74	F	- lives independently in a rented flat, married	In a care home Double room (sharing room with her husband)	In a care home Double room (sharing room with her husband)
Elza	89	F	- lives independently in a house, widow	In a care home Single room, shared bathroom	In a care home Single room, shared bathroom

Note: Pseudonyms are used to ensure the anonymity of the study participants.

4.3.2 Data collection process – Stage 2

Stage 2 of this research explored six older Slovenians' experiences of engaging in personally meaningful occupations, at different time-points during their transition into a care home. Philosophically, this study is based on the interpretative phenomenology, with Heidegger (1953) in particular, emphasising the significance of the temporal aspects of peoples' lives. Husserl's views that knowledge can only be obtained through human conscious experience (Husserl, 1960) also indicate the importance of exploring experiences at particular moments. In principle, phenomenologists aim to capture individuals' 'lived experiences', as they experience phenomena in relation to their life contexts (Finlay, 2011). For example, it was important, in the current study, to explore older peoples' experiences of occupational engagement at different time points during their transitions into a care home, whilst this transition was

still underway. The above led the researcher to take a longitudinal approach to the Stage 2 data collection; gathering data at multiple time-points to explore ways in which participants' experiences might have unfolded or changed (Flick, 2014; Patton, 2015). The researcher conducted three semi-structured interviews with each of the six older adults recruited, seeing each of them before their care home relocation and then one and six months later. The researcher chose this time frame in order to explore participants' occupational engagement whilst they awaited their care home moves and whilst they adjusted to their new living environments (Lee, 1999). It also enabled her to investigate participants' experiences of their relocation in the longer term (Wiersma and Dupuis, 2010).

Longitudinal studies can be time-consuming (Flick, 2014) and challenging in terms of recruiting and retaining participants throughout the data collection process (Snelgrove, 2014). However, longitudinal research offers a valuable insight into the ways in which contextual changes can influence peoples' experiences over time (Thomson and Holland, 2003). The current study explored whether participants' changed living environments affected their engagement in meaningful occupation. Collecting data three times, over a period of six months, was considered sufficient to capture participants' experiences of occupational engagement during their transition process.

An interview schedule was developed to guide the initial Stage 2 interview (Appendix J); the researcher discussing the proposed questions with her academic supervisors, as before. Most of these questions also appeared in the Stage 2 second and third interviews (Appendix K). Once again, the researcher

was able to elicit additional material by asking probing questions, based on participants' personal experiences. Although the researcher took care to debrief all of the study participants at the end of each of their interviews, the care home social worker, who had served as a 'gatekeeper' to the study, was also notified about the time and place of each interview. This enabled her to offer support if any participants became distressed after their interviews. As noted previously, this step also maintained the researcher's safety, with most of the initial interviews being conducted in participants' own homes. The researcher explained the study's purpose to all of the participants before each of their three interviews. The consent form (Appendix L) was read through and signed by both participants and the researcher before all three interviews. As before, all of the Stage 2 interviews were conducted face-to-face in the Slovenian language and audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder. A total of eighteen interviews were conducted; each of which lasted approximately one hour.

4.3.3 Stage 2 – Data analysis process

All of the Stage 2 interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim; three transcripts per participant generating eighteen transcripts in total. The researcher used the same guidelines for IPA data analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), that she had followed in Stage 1. Reviewing the published IPA longitudinal studies (Snelgrove, 2014; Spiers, Smith and Drage, 2016), and consulting IPA's key author (Professor Jonathan Smith), indicated that the final steps of the IPA data analysis process, in longitudinal studies, can be conducted in two ways. Snelgrove (2014) reported looking across all of the transcripts of each time-point, leading to the generation of three sets of super-

ordinate themes. By contrast, Spiers, Smith and Drage (2016) reported analysing all three interviews from a single participant first and then looking across cases. In order to acknowledge the idiographic position fully, the researcher in the current research chose to adopt the latter approach, as detailed in the following paragraph.

As in Stage 1 of this research, the researcher analysed all of the Stage 2 transcripts in the Slovenian language, before translating selected elements transcripts into English, including all emergent, superordinate, master themes and overarching themes. She went on to review the interview recordings and transcripts several times during the initial data analysis process (Appendix M), again noting descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). She then developed emergent and superordinate themes from each of the interviews conducted with one participant (Appendix N, Appendix O, Appendix P). Looking across superordinate themes of all three interviews from one participant, enabled a master table of themes to be devised for each participant (Appendix R); resulting in six tables of master themes in total. Each master table of themes contained three or four sub-themes. The final stage of the Stage 2 data analysis process involved looking across master themes of all six participants (Appendix S), resulting in the emergence of three overarching themes with sub-themes (Appendix T). This highlighted convergences and divergences in their experiences. The researcher's commitment to idiography made it important for her to analyse each transcript from one participant fully, before moving on to the next transcript. Conducting the data analysis across all three of the interviews from one participant, before looking across all six cases, also enabled the researcher to consider each

individual case fully, before moving on to the next case; an approach of significant importance in IPA studies (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Finlay, 2011).

Reflexive commentary

Data analysis for the 2nd stage was a deeply emotional process for me and it was significant for the quality of the research to acknowledge that. This was mostly due to analysing the data shortly after I relocated from Slovenia to the UK and intensively engaging in the analysis for a long period of time. Although I perceived my experience as 'different', I was still able to identify with some of my participants' experiences and meanings, especially in terms of detaching from their home environments and previous meaningful occupations. I can say that this process made me more aware of who I was as a person and of my cultural background. However, I also believe that the process made me a more conscientious researcher as it made me realise more of all the potential researcher's influences on the data analysis process.

4.4 Findings – Stage 2

A master table of themes (Appendix S) was developed for each participant, based on their three interviews. As Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is committed to idiography (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), the researcher analysed each interview transcript in isolation attempting to set aside both the ideas raised in individual participant's previous interviews and any preconceptions held about the phenomenon of interest. The same

approach process was employed between the individual study participants. Finally, overarching themes were developed from all six participants' findings (Appendix T). Individual study participants' data are first presented to introduce the ways in which moving into a care home influenced each person's experience of engagement in occupation, including their meaningful occupations. Three overarching themes, with subthemes (Appendix T), are then discussed focusing on participants' diverging and converging experiences.

Janez

Janez was a 92-year-old man living alone in his own city centre flat. His wife had died some 12 years earlier, but Janez kept in regular contact with his children and grandchildren. He had an established daily routine, including regular occupations that he enjoyed and found meaningful, such as driving and shopping. Janez's decision to move into a care home was planned carefully, with no particular precipitating factor. At the time of the first interview, he was in the process of dealing with the final arrangements needed ahead of his actual relocation one week later. Three interviews conducted over six months revealed that Janez's transition process, from the domestic to the care home environment, was still an on-going process at the time of the last interview. The influence that this transition had on his occupational engagement is captured in the following paragraphs.

One of Janez's most meaningful occupations was visiting his weekend country cottage. This was a family place, built by Janez decades earlier, in which he had spent most of his free time, either with his family or alone. Janez did not

necessarily need to be actively engaged, when he was visiting, seeing the visit itself as a meaningful occupation. He enjoyed pottering around the cottage; taking pleasure from simply being there. He described feeling revived, when he was able to go there, and improved health.

'...three months ago they found out that I have some kind of impairment on my left eye. Some kind of impairment. Yellow spot. But they didn't say what exactly would that be, you know. Is it an age-related disease or...you know at XXX [my weekend place] I have pine trees, I have greenness around me and I can really say that I can see better. That air influences my eyesight.' (Janez, 1st interview, 213-217)

Janez perceived being in his cottage as beneficial to his health. This could be due to his attachment to the building's beautiful surroundings, which he loved, and/or to the positive memories evoked. Visiting his cottage there enabled Janez to reminiscence about earlier times spent there with his wife, his family and his friends. He especially valued his continuing ability to drive, as this gave him freedom over the timing of his cottage visits. In the second interview (one month after he had relocated to live in a care home) it was evident that the combination of these two occupations (driving and visiting his cottage) had helped him to adjust to living in an institutional environment. Janez's retreat to his cottage could be seen as a form of positive escapism or liberation; less a flight from care home living, than a move towards familiarity and a place of past enjoyment.

'Well, and my great comfort is my weekend place, you know. There, I can revive there, as a human being, you know...' (Janez, 2nd interview, 26-27)

Janez's move into a care home also coincided with his decision to stop driving, which happened between the second and third study interviews. This decision, which Janez reached unprompted, had a major impact on his occupational engagement. The impact related not so much to the frequency of his cottage visits, as his son was happy to take him if Janez wanted to go, as to the loss of the freedom to not on the spur of the moment, whenever he chose. Janez missed this loss of independence; having failed to consider it when he thought of the possible implications of giving up his car.

Janez's decision to stop driving, at the same time as moving into a care home, represented a general sense of 'stopping' for him. Thus, when he was asked about his up-coming driving cessation, Janez said: *'I'll just sit down and remain seated.'* Janez's comment could reflect his general perception of care homes, as he often referred to them as 'waiting rooms for death'; a stereotype often attached to institutions such as care homes. Janez expressed his perception of his new living environment by using metaphors to illustrate his emotions, as follows:

'Here I feel....this is 'Predjama castle' [this is a famous castle in Slovenia - it means a castle in front of a cave]. (Janez, 3rd interview, 14-15)

Based on this perception, Janez decided to cease driving. This disengagement also prevented him from visiting his weekend place, however; clearly indicating the interconnectedness of these two meaningful occupations.

Throughout the transition process, Janez balanced his everyday occupations by trying to hold on to his established daily routine wherever possible. This

included engaging in such occupations as following his morning routine, taking regular exercise and making shopping trips. He found the adjustment to institutional routines challenging, however, and it evoked feelings of unfamiliarity. During the second and third interviews, Janez referred to the loss of his everyday routine. For instance, he had been used to making his own breakfast every day and no longer had to do this. While this change could be perceived as offering a comfort, he perceived it as a loss of familiarity in his everyday life.

Janez's most challenging experience was sharing the bathroom with his neighbour, as he noted at interview a month after his relocation. Although he developed certain adjustment strategies, he was very hopeful about acquiring a single room with an en-suite bathroom. Janez did not complain about his neighbour, but instead felt obliged to adjust his own behaviour because he had arrived most recently.

'I'm new here and he's been here for a longer period of time...and I want to adjust to his way. So, for example, I need to be careful that he goes to the toilet first and then it's my turn. And so on...That's it...and that's difficult to get used to.' (Janez, 2nd interview, 147-150)

Although adjusting to his neighbour's everyday routine was challenging, Janez saw it as an integral part of his new living arrangements. This could be due to the fact that war and poverty meant that older Slovenians often experienced harsh living conditions during their lives. Given this, Janez may simply have seen his current situation as something to be accepted, in order to get on with his life.

Although Janez could not influence some of the challenges to his everyday routines, because of the care home's institutional schedule, it was important to him to decide how he spent his time in other ways.

'No, I said they invited me, but.... I don't feel the need to engage in them. But I do go listen to those lectures.. or to the meetings, I do go to that.' (Janez, 3rd interview, 246-247)

Although the care home offered a variety of different organised activities and events, Janez was very selective and chose to attend only those that he found meaningful. By maintaining control over his occupations, within the established institutional routine, he tried to preserve his sense of autonomy and sustain a feeling of continuity between his past and present lives. However, he also acknowledged the feelings of loneliness and loss that occurred during this process.

'You feel even more alone, even more lonely. It's like a solitary confinement, a solitary confinement...' (Janez, 3rd interview, 15-16)

By using a metaphor of 'solitary confinement', Janez appeared to be referring to issues beyond solely the restrictions of his room or the care home environment. His comments suggested a more general sense of loss, including the loss of his home, his meaningful occupations, his abilities and his social contacts.

Although Janez preferred to be by himself, he did start to socialise more by the time of the last interview. This suggests that he needed time to adjust to the move before he was able to consider making new friends. By the time of the last interview, six months after his care home move, Janez was enjoying the

company of a group of female residents at meal times; sharing and comparing his first experiences of his new home with them.

'With those ladies there we get along nicely, you know. When I was driving from my weekend cottage once, my son took me... and I said to him.... let's stop at xxxx [famous cake shop]...so I brought a few cream cakes [well known Slovenian cake from one particular area]. And I said... that's for my ladies... (Janez, 3rd interview, 115-118)

Spending time with these new friends gave Janez a further meaningful occupation: a chance to converse and to show affection. Moreover, because these friends were female, he was able to take a gentlemanly role and to make a good impression.

In terms of his social contacts, Janez especially enjoyed spending time with his family, including his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It was important to him to have a good relationship with them; his family representing security (the people that he could always count on). Janez felt safe knowing that he could call on his family, if he needed anything, even though he did not like the idea of having to depend on them or to burden them. He especially enjoyed it when they came to his weekend cottage, which had always been considered a family place, where they were able to engage in activities together.

'I was by myself for a while and then the children arrived...grandchildren and we were together all the way until after New Year's Eve. It was lovely, sooo lovely. I mean...it's been a while since we had such a great time.' (Janez, 3rd interview, 140-142)

After six months in a care home, Janez was still experiencing some challenges in terms of his occupational engagement. Undertaking personally meaningful activities helped him manage those challenges, however, thereby enabling him to continue to adjust.

Dora

Dora was a 90-year-old woman living alone in a house near a city centre. She was having health problems, and was in hospital at the time of her first interview. After being hospitalised, she decided not to return to home, but to relocate to a distant care home. Dora's main reason for relocating was her dissatisfaction with her original home environment. A construction company had started a project nearby and Dora felt they were destroying her home, to which she was attached, and the surroundings which she had always enjoyed. One of the reasons that she wanted to relocate to her chosen care home was that two friends and a cousin were already living there, which she found reassuring. Later on, she discovered that they all had severe health issues and that socialising with them was not as she imagined it would be before relocating.

Dora was heavily involved with the activities of the local association, aiming to influence local politics to improve people's lives. Her role within the association had shaped her life for the past two decades. Striving to improve her local community, to enhance residents' lives, had become a meaningful occupation. Dora shared her thoughts about current Slovenian society passionately, in all three interviews, referring to everyday issues like city traffic, healthy lifestyles and quality of life issues. It was evident that she saw herself as a social

advocate, promoting people's rights and justice. She wanted to continue her role at the association once she had relocated to the care home.

'...I know I will have to adjust, but I'll keep my contact with my association through e-mail...although I fear people [other members] would give up on certain issues.' (Dora, 1st interview, 867-869)

Dora expressed concerns about other association members being less active than she was herself, especially since her chosen care home was far from her original hometown. However, as the above quote indicates, she wanted to maintain her involvement in this meaningful occupation. During her second and third interviews, she highlighted the fact that she had not been able to sustain the same level of engagement as before, but she still saw herself as a social advocate and tried to sustain this role in the care home.

'So I passed through and some of them already knew I'm the one who digs....so this woman said to me...I don't have anything, she said she has no money, that they took everything away from her in order to pay for her living expenses, that she can't even buy coffee and so on. And I said I'll go to the social workers and ask about this matter....and I also asked at the bar to bring her a cup of coffee....my treat.' (Dora, 3rd interview, 537-542)

Throughout her interviews, Dora approached her life in the care home at an institutional level; constantly seeking solutions to any issues that she noticed. She always looked at the 'big picture'; advocating for other residents, on both an individual and a collective level. Dora acted by talking to care home staff members and the manager, to try to influence the existing organisational culture. In this way, she was able to help other residents and to maintain her meaningful occupation. In contrast, she sometimes felt frustrated when she

noticed that other residents were more passive about identified issues than she was herself. Her attitude sounded somewhat patronising, towards other residents; hindering her adjustment to her new living environment.

'Bitter faces, not very nice...I think they need to wake up....' (Dora, 2nd interview, 223)

Dora's advocate role may have prevented her from assimilating into the care home community. She felt unable to discuss her views with some of the other residents, due to perceived intellectual differences. It was evident that Dora saw herself as an intellectual and felt unable to talk to some residents in the same way as others. Instead, she preferred to communicate with staff members, although their availability was limited because of their work responsibilities.

'I talk to those who understand me. And those are social workers, but they don't have time...' (Dora, 2nd interview, 338-339)

As Dora had decided to move into the care home directly from hospital, she had had to share her room with another resident until a single room became available. Dora found this arrangement extremely challenging, in terms of maintaining her daily routines. Although her socially-focused attitudes helped her to understand the constraints imposed by the institutional environment, the latter still impacted upon her everyday routines and her ability to engage in meaningful occupations.

'I'm in bed by 8...if I had my own room, and a TV, and a computer and all that interests me...it wouldn't be like that, would be like at home...[going to bed] around 10 and then getting up at 6. ...Yes, I can't have the light so I could work, and then I just go to bed...and I fall asleep.' (Dora, 2nd interview, 1351-1354)

Dora felt restricted by having to adjust her evening routine to that of her roommate. She consoled herself by engaging in occupations that had meaning for her during the day. Activities such as spending time outdoors, walking around the city and observing nature made her feel 'alive and enabled her to distance herself momentarily from perceived institutional constraints. She described having used the same strategy when she had been living at home; avoiding an increasingly unpleasant local environment by going out cycling. Dora also saw such occupations as spending time in nature and cycling as ways to maintain her health.

'When I was under pressure, I sat on my bike and I came back healthy. There...and when I couldn't do it in the last year...I said, I'll live as long as I can ride my bicycle. That was my life rule. And that's exactly what happened, exactly that.' (Dora, 1st interview, 696-699)

By contrast, Dora felt that times when she was unable to engage in her chosen occupations made her unwell. She said that she had been very conscious of her health, even before her recent illness, and she was clearly proud of her fitness in extreme old age. Dora's preoccupation with maintaining her health became even more evident after she moved into the care home; perhaps triggered by seeing her friends, and many other residents, facing health challenges. She constantly emphasised her personal responsibility for her health; planning daily activities to help her to remain fit and active. Indeed, engaging in health-maintaining occupations became her priority.

'It's up to me [maintaining health], I can go out whenever, I can walk the stairs,...' (Dora, 2nd interview, 470-471)

Dora's apparent inability to settle into her new living environment may also have explained her ongoing focus on health-related thoughts and actions. She knew that, whilst she was still capable of looking after herself, she could return home. At the time of her last interview, Dora was pleased that she would soon be able to have her own room, in the care home, but she had nevertheless started to consider her options, in terms of her future living environment. She made regular visits to her old home, which also spurred her thinking.

'I don't know, I don't know, actually I love everything that's there, everything, the rooms, the garden, birds that are there...blackbirds are singing now....and I have pine trees, around 60 of them, I planted them...You're somehow emotionally attached, and the green fence around the house....but there are unpleasant things as well...so you have to balance what and how...what's more and what's less... There's that noise around...but we have noise here too...but less than there.....' (Dora, 3rd interview, 1085-1091)

Dora's attachment to her old home appeared even stronger when she was only visiting. She could also see that living in her original town would enable her to become actively engaged at the local association again. Although Dora did not mention her family often, throughout the study interviews, her last interview showed that she had a close relationship with them. Being unmarried, Dora had no children of her own, but she did keep in regular contact with her brother and two sisters; all of whom lived near to her old house.

'So I do have contacts with them...and I like the fact I find myself with them.' (Dora, 3rd interview, 1051)

Dora's life in a care home led her to know herself better and come to realise just how much family meant. Both Dora's cousin and her close friend died in the

care home that Dora was living in, whilst she was there. This meant that Dora lost one of her reasons to move to a new town. At the time of the last interview, Dora was trying to decide whether to stay in the care home, or to return home. Her care home experience had made her more aware of the aspects of life that she enjoyed and the influence of her living environment upon them.

Bor

Bor was an 81 year-old man, living in a house near the city centre. His wife had relocated into a care home, due to ill-health, and Bor was waiting for a room to become available so that he could join her. When such a vacancy did arise, Bor decided to move immediately, even though he and his wife were not then able to share a room. His main concern when he arrived in the care home was his wife's well-being. This became very evident at the time of his second interview, a month after his relocation. Bor often referred to his married life as a challenging journey, travelled together, especially as his and his wife's lives were also linked professionally. Bor's wife died between the times of his second and third interview, so that he had to both grieve and adjust to a new living environment.

Bor had a strong sense of his professional self and this was evident throughout his three interviews. He had worked as a sound engineer; recording music of varying genres. He remained engaged in a range of related projects in later life. At interview, he emphasised that music-related occupations were the most enjoyable and meaningful, stating that: '*Music...I can't live without it...*'. He had obtained a music degree, early in his life, at a time when such things were rare

in Yugoslavia. Having a degree had given added value to his professional activities and he saw himself as a revolutionary in the field.

'...I made a revolution in the area of recording music...it was a different approach, not technical....musicological approach...' (Bor, 2nd interview, 750-751)

During his first interview, it appeared very important for Bor to explain his beginnings and how he came to take up his chosen profession. He emphasised the extent to which his profession was embedded in his whole life, including the time of his adjustment to the care home environment. He supported this assertion by relating several anecdotes from his professional life. Bor's memories appeared to become more vivid during the relocation process; perhaps, as a result of increased reflections on his past life and/or the need to relocate previously work-related objects.

...and these are important things...which I'm telling you about...and they're so alive now...about how we worked back then, what we did...(Bor, 2nd interview, 678-679)

Bor's professional opinion had been so highly valued among professional musicians that he saw his work as a cultural legacy to which future generations of musicians would be able to refer. At the time of his last interview, he was ordering and organising his past work, both in his room in the care home and in public music registers.

'I still didn't bring all the records...they're doing a register of my recordings now.....for example, this is not mine...but anyway...every record has its content and whose recording this is. My name comes in here...' (Bor, 3rd interview, 546-548)

Bor's profession was something that he discussed very competently and he retained a strong reputation both publicly and amongst his peers. Despite this, he was reserved about engaging in any kind of music-related event or activity in the care home.

'My fear is that they'd want me to take over the choir...because I won't be able to do anything there, you know? I know how that goes, I've had different choirs before, I was leading them...I'd go crazy...and no result. Everyone's going to expect something from me....they're not even good enough for church singing'...(Bor, 1st interview, 1401-1405)

Bor appeared to fear that he might jeopardise his professional reputation if he could not achieve his previously high musical standards. His comments sounded somewhat patronising towards other residents who sang in a care home choir. He was very aware that choir members were not professional singers, suggesting that his attitude was linked to his high expectations of himself, left over from his professional life. In order to avoid any possible conflict, Bor therefore refused to engage in all music-related activities.

Bor's wife had been involved in theatre production; providing an additional professional link in their marriage. Bor called their professions '*crazy professions*', which was not meant to convey anything negative, but rather something unique and special. Throughout his interviews, there was a palpable sense of togetherness whenever Bor spoke about his wife. Working in similar professions had seemingly enhanced their understanding of both each other and their shared professional worlds.

Bor's wife's illness had been his main reason for moving into the care home. Although the couple were unable to share a room, caring for his wife became Bor's primary occupation. Being constantly with his wife prevented him from starting to assimilate into his new living environment. It was not until his wife had died, that Bor started to engage in his previously enjoyed occupations. This timing suggests that Bor's wife's death enabled him to begin to adjust to the care home environment. Bor experienced his wife's death as the end of his life's longest chapter; the end of a shared journey to which he frequently referred at interview.

A sense of family was very important to Bor, possibly because his father left him when he was still a young child. Bor described spending time with his children and grandchildren as amongst his most meaningful occupations. Although he and his wife had always been busy, they had still tried to maintain a family atmosphere. Bor often referred to shared activities such as spending time at the family's weekend cottage, doing DIY work with his grandson and exchanging books throughout his interviews. He decided not to visit the family's weekend place whilst his wife was dying, however. Perhaps reminders of the happy times that Bor and his wife had spent there would have worsened his grief. In his 3rd interview, after his wife had died, Bor referred to his family even more than before, noting that they had persuaded him to start visiting the family cottage again.

'If nothing else...I can go and look for mushrooms...[at the weekend cottage] ha, ha, ha...and I know how to repair stuff...and I know how to cook...so that they can come and I'll wait for them...' (Bor, 3rd interview, 1131-1133)

Spending time with his family, and pottering around the weekend cottage, gave Bor a sense of security, especially as he had experienced some ill-health since his wife had died. He clearly valued and longed for a family atmosphere, describing how he missed this in the care home:

'And sometimes for every little thing...you know the things that make a family atmosphere....you need to create that by yourself [in a care home]. It's not bad, but sometimes it's impossible, you know...' (Bor, 2nd interview, 1806-1808)

Bor had many talents; originating in his youth, when he had had to earn money to help his mother to support his family. His myriad skills, extending from domestic tasks to DIY work, also suggested the value that he placed on productive occupation. Although Bor found his usual activities curtailed by the care home environment, he continued to undertake some DIY work there following his wife's death. He also started to plan ways to adjust his room, to enable him to engage in further activities that he enjoyed.

'If they drag me from here [laughing]...which they usually do [his family]...then it's great and I'm happy to go and I come back all happy so that the rhythm changes a bit....Otherwise I started working in the workshop downstairs [DIY work], I haven't finished yet and there's lots to do by the end of the year...' (Bor, 3rd interview, 133-136)

Bor's other consolation, in the care home, was socialising with another resident who was a former colleague. Although he generally enjoyed socialising, Bor was clearly selective about the people with whom he chose to spend his time.

'And then we talk...sometimes for 3 hours, we sit downstairs and we talk. We're remembering things or we criticize...so that's nice. That was a good transition

and I suppose it would be helpful to have more of that... (Bor, 2nd interview, 329-331)

Bor's statement that *'that was a good transition'*, shows that he acknowledged the value of spending time with his ex-colleague. Their conversations represented much more than simple socialising to Bor; due to their reference to his past professional life.

Jelka

Jelka was living alone in sheltered housing, near to her original home, at the time of her first interview. She had been living there for some while; her husband having moved into a care home in a different city post-stroke. The couple had moved many times in old age, mostly in order to maintain their properties to protect their children's inheritance. Jelka's decision to move into a care home was triggered by her desire to be close to her husband and to look after him. She planned to follow him as soon as a shared room became available. Although her decision seemed sudden, the couple had always planned an eventual care home move. Jelka was very proud of her foresight, especially in the light of her husband's recent stroke.

Jelka was highly influenced by her family background. She had lived on a farm with her parents, when she was a child, where work and productivity had been key values. Her early life informed her way of thinking and her life-long occupational engagement. She often used a well-known Slovenian saying *'I'm made of a farmer's dough'*, when referring to herself; meaning that she saw herself as having farmers' values, such as hard work, resilience and self-

discipline. Jelka said that she enjoyed being engaged in productive occupations, including taking care of her family home and looking after her grandchildren. Before retirement, she had worked as a healthcare assistant in a local hospital's operating theatres.

Jelka looked after her family for most of her life, but focused her care more on her husband in the years after he had his stroke. When Jelka had a fall, they decided that he should relocate to a care home and she should move into sheltered housing. The fall slowed down Jelka's productivity. She soon decided to follow her husband, into the care home, partly because she felt lonely but mostly because she was dissatisfied with the standard of his care.

'When I visit him I can see the tears in his eyes... and I can see he's not looked after the way I was looking after him. He says it's ok, it's ok....but it's not ok if your clothes are filthy from lunch...and that bothers me'. (Jelka, 1st interview, 1429-1431)

Jelka sought to re-establish her previous carer role, perhaps in order to regain her sense of productivity. Although she cited loneliness as a reason to follow her husband into the care home, she also missed the meaningful occupation of looking after him. This link became more evident at the time of Jelka's second and third interviews, when she was again caring for him.

'I look after him...everything he needs. We don't call for care home staff...I manage all by myself. I also tidy up the room...I find work for myself...I do yes'. (Jelka, 3rd interview, 323-324)

Even though Jelka's main roles were linked to productivity, she described her most meaningful occupations as *'something for my soul'*. These diverse

occupations included listening to music, taking walks, reading and watching her favourite TV shows. She engaged in these occupations whenever she had time to herself. Her interviews indicated that she had experienced some marital and family relationship challenges, in the past. Maintaining her meaningful occupations may have helped Jelka to manage and/or escape from these issues.

‘...when I was sad...I went and bought a cassette...so that I took care of my soul. I had over 400 cassettes and records, I took care of my soul if something was wrong.’

Researcher: What about now?

*‘The radio is constantly playing in the background...silently...it’s for my soul.’
(Jelka, 2nd interview, 1237-1241)*

Jelka seemed to find these occupations restorative; helping her to deal with the challenges of everyday life, including those that she met on moving into the care home. She made sure to find additional occupations *‘for her soul’* after she relocated, involving herself in various arts and crafts groups and singing in the care home’s choir. Her involvement enabled her to start socialising with other home residents, whilst continuing to be productive. In this way, Jelka successfully maintained an ongoing balance between occupations that were productive and others that nourished her soul.

In addition to the above, Jelka expressed nostalgia for some of the occupations that she had had to stop in recent years, such as driving and cycling. At the time of her last interview, she also expressed sadness about the care home environment not being appropriate for someone as active as herself.

'I'm much too young for being here...you have to be ill and old here. And I'm still young....I mean not too young in terms of my age, I'm 75....but too young to be in a care home. Because I can still look after myself...and now the others are doing it for me. And that bothers me.' (Jelka, 3rd interview, 25-28)

Despite being heavily engaged in looking after her husband, and involving herself in several organised care home activities, Jelka missed her previous occupational roles. This could reflect a loss of everyday control, due to the inevitable influence of the institution's schedules and routines. It could also signal Jelka's perception of care homes as places where residents passively received care; an environment into which she did not fit.

Miha

Miha was a 90-year-old man who had entered the care home a few days before his first interview; having previously lived alone in a flat near to the city centre. He had been married, but his wife had died some 16 years earlier. Miha had had a visual impairment since he was 20 years old; making his adjustment to his new living environment particularly challenging. While still living at home, Miha had enjoyed regular morning walks for the sense of freedom and independence that they conveyed. His confidence in this activity was shaken by a fall, triggering his decision to move into a care home.

Miha was proud that he had developed most of his independence after his wife's death. In a way, his wife had made him more dependent than he had needed to be.

'My wife died 16 years ago and I was alone then. And I alone had to, you know...I didn't want to be indoors all the time,...because my wife didn't let me walk outdoors alone, you know. So then I started walking by myself, and I reached the 1st house, the 2nd house, the 3rd house and so on. And back...and that's how I made certain routes and get to know them...' (Miha, 1st interview, 58-62)

Although Miha valued his independence in general, he described taking walks as his most meaningful occupation and a perceived indicator of his independence. He often referred to his walks during his three interviews; in sentences such as the following:

'Everything is ok but I just can't forget the times when I could still walk on my own, ha ha..' (Miha, 3rd interview, 11-12)

Adjusting to the care home was challenging for Miha and the new living environment made it difficult for him to continue taking his regular morning walks. As a result, he particularly cherished the company of a new friend who lived in the same care home. Miha's friend helped him to get used to his new room and enabled him to go out for occasional walks and visits to a nearby church. Whilst Miha valued these chances to socialise, he particularly appreciated his friend's help to engage in his preferred meaningful occupation. When Miha's friend became unwell, he had to think about other options to accommodate his occupational engagement.

Miha relocated to a care home because he no longer felt safe living alone but the move made him more dependent on others. He acknowledged that he had felt more engaged in his original home, presumably because he had been more familiar with the physical environment.

'I somehow got used to it...I don't have anything else but the radio...with CD player....I get up in the morning and I don't exercise the way I did when at home...I mostly listen to the radio...listen to the news and so on....nothing special...I have my own thoughts'. (Miha, 2nd interview, 59-62)

Miha seemed reassured by his new living environment and enjoyed his time reflecting on his life and being generally less busy than before. Miha's decision to move may have related to his feelings about no longer feeling safe to walk alone after his fall; the move reflecting also an acknowledgment of the fact that it was time to withdraw from active occupations. This outcome could also be linked to the role of faith in Miha's life; an acceptance that the time had come for him to slow down and to accept his destiny.

When Miha was talking about his everyday life, he often referred to his Christian beliefs. Attending church, including Sunday mass, were important parts of his life's routine. These links became increasingly evident at the time of Miha's relocation. This perhaps reflects his need to reveal his religion-related occupations with care. Slovenian citizens were not able to express their religious beliefs freely, under the previous political system.

'...sometimes...well...I'll be honest with you, I sometimes pray a little. I have my rosary, and also for passing the time, you know...' (Miha, 2nd interview, 323-324)

Miha saw his Christianity as more than attending church, following religious customs and passing time. Instead, it helped him to face life's challenges, starting with his early sight loss and moving on to his later reduction in independence and transition to care home living. During his interviews, he

constantly repeated statements like *'I have to accept things as they are'* (2nd interview). Although he missed the meaningful occupation of his regular morning walks, he told himself that it was time to accept his inability to continue with them. Miha spent increasing amounts of time on his religious practices after he relocated to the care home; listening to the Bible, praying and reflecting on his life in relation to the Bible stories that he read. These activities further strengthened his faith; helping him to better accept the loss of his regular morning walks.

'If I could walk my old paths again, no.. no.. I can't do it anymore, there comes the time and you need to accept it' (Miha, 3rd interview, 899-900).

Miha's religious practices appeared to help him to manage the challenges of his care home transition, including the loss of his once meaningful occupations.

Elza

Elza was an 89-year-old lady who was still living in her own home at the time of her first interview. She had lived there alone, on the ground floor of the house, since her husband had died some ten years earlier. Her son and his family currently lived upstairs; a common living arrangement in Slovenia. Elza decided to move into a care home due to urinary incontinence, although she and her husband had actually planned such a move before his death.

Elza's main and most valued occupations, throughout her life, were taking care of her family and home. A sense of home had been important to her since she and her family had been forced from their home in the middle of the night,

during the Second World War. Elza reflected on this traumatic event several times in the course of her interviews. Losing her home at an early age helped to explain why a sense of family and home had such meaning for her. Her late husband had also been a General, during the war. This meant that the couple lived in many locations and did not settle in one place until late in their lives. All these circumstances helped to explain why it was so important to Elza that she and her husband had eventually established a safe and welcoming family home. Elza's views suggest a desire to provide an environment for her children that she had not herself enjoyed.

'But I must tell you that the centre was always my home. The goal, all the way. Even now...it still goes through me...It was here [the family centre]...my husband and I.' (Elza, 1st interview, 594-596)

The meaning of home went far beyond simply physical space for Elza; being related closely to a strong sense of family and of occupations related to that sense. Her husband's senior army post meant that she had often played the role of social host, and consequently she enjoyed planning and organising family gatherings in old age. She and her husband had represented a shelter, to which their children and grandchildren could come whenever it was needed. Elza and her husband had also looked after their grandchildren and had taken them away on holiday. Elza emphasised, during her interviews, her view that these actions helped to create family memories.

Elza's health eventually started to restrict her, however, at which point, she began to disengage from her usual daily activities. Her previously meaningful

occupations such as spending time with her family, started to be burdensome; prompting her care home move.

'I was always rushing...family, holidays, birthdays...we were always together...They didn't have the time and I enjoyed it and I took the time for it, I enjoyed doing it and they all felt pleasant at my place...I hosted them and I enjoyed it...but that's over now, it's over now. I say to them, not for a long time [when the family asks to visit]...I can't handle it.' (Elza, 1st interview, 711-715)

The above quotation highlights the extent to which Elza's thoughts were dominated by her incontinence; making her feel helpless and anxious. Her sense of helplessness was further suggested by the emphasis that she placed on her inability to continue to play the role of social hostess.

Elza was concerned about her health and her upcoming care home move, as she did not know what to expect of her new living environment or the people that were there. After the move, Elza had to share a bathroom with her neighbour; a particular difficulty given Elza's incontinence and frequent need to use the toilet. Although Elza was placed on a waiting list for a single room, she found the period immediately after her relocation very stressful in terms of her self-care.

'And then I wake up ...and the conditions in this room of mine...I'm happy with it, very happy...except for the bathroom. And I need it...I need it so much. I need to go...I come [to the bathroom door] and it's busy. I tolerate it but I actually torture myself.' (Elza, 2nd interview, 162-165)

Although Elza's health and care home living arrangements, affected her everyday life, she did not complain. She referred to her room as '*charming*' and

'cosy', at interview; using diminutives when mentioning it. Her choice of language reflected the Slovenian terms used for expressing affection towards a particular place or object.

Despite this, Elza's concerns about her health had a huge influence on her transition into the care home environment; preventing her from connecting with other residents. She even felt too tired, at times, to receive visitors, including members of her family.

'They do come, but I'm not able to handle a lot...no...but they do come, for example my granddaughter comes with her boy, but he's so full of life, 2 years old, running around...sometimes I'm able to...then we talk, or we learn....but then I can't anymore. I just can't, I can't....'(Elza, 3rd interview, 302-305)

Elza's health caused her constant frustration. At times she also felt uncomfortable in company because she was unable to predict when she would need to retire to her room. Having to deal with her health helped Elza to identify with other care home residents, however. Although she voiced dissatisfaction with some aspects of her living arrangements, her role as a resident was not amongst them.

'The girls [staff] are rushing, their work is rushed....And we [the residents] can feel that. We, the elderly sometimes don't sleep at night...I can hear the others saying the same and everyone knows that... some of them wake up at night due to pain or they can't sleep or they fall asleep later...and at half six in the morning, they're [staff] already here...their rush impacts us.' (Elza, 2nd interview, 86-90)

Elza described a range of ways in which the care home's processes forced residents to adjust their own usual daily routines. She often referred to care

home staff rushing their work; behaviour which irritated her, especially when she needed their help. This view could have reflected a differing perception of time on the part of Elza and the busy care home staff members.

Elza thought deeply about all that she experienced; making reflection one of her most meaningful occupations in later life. Her interviews were largely taken up with reminiscences and stories of times past. The latter usually illustrated her values and attitudes, in order to compare them with the present.

'There's a huge difference between generations...you can feel it in young ones being indifferent, indifferent. When we were young we were thinking ahead, for the future, what now...but we lived through the war and we felt it well. And then we had to start again....' (Elza, 1st interview, 251-254)

In Elza's opinion, events such as the Second World War had had a huge influence on her generation's ways of living and thinking. She sometimes expressed disappointment that the younger generation did not appreciate their elders' experiences; usually applying such comments to her own family. Her reflections were probably triggered by concerns about her family, as she usually started to make such comparisons when she thought about her children's problems.

Elza's comments also appeared to be linked to her interest in political events and she expressed genuine concerns for future generations, including younger members of her own family. She often reflected on the differences in the ways that life events were managed in the past and in the present. Her thinking usually moved beyond her personal problems to wider societal problems. By the

time of her last interview, Elza had become excessively concerned about her family and their future. This may have reflected her loss of the overview of their lives that she had been used to having, as she moved into the care home. Elza saw herself as her family's 'safety net' and realised that, since her move, she was no longer able to fulfil this role.

'I'm worried about how the children will manage in the future....when I talk to my friends...why do you care so much, you gave them so much and did so much...now it's their turn.' (Elza, 2nd interview, 1391-1393)

One of Elza's main concerns, during her second and third interviews, related to the issue of inheritance, and her responsibility to care for and divide her belongings between her children.

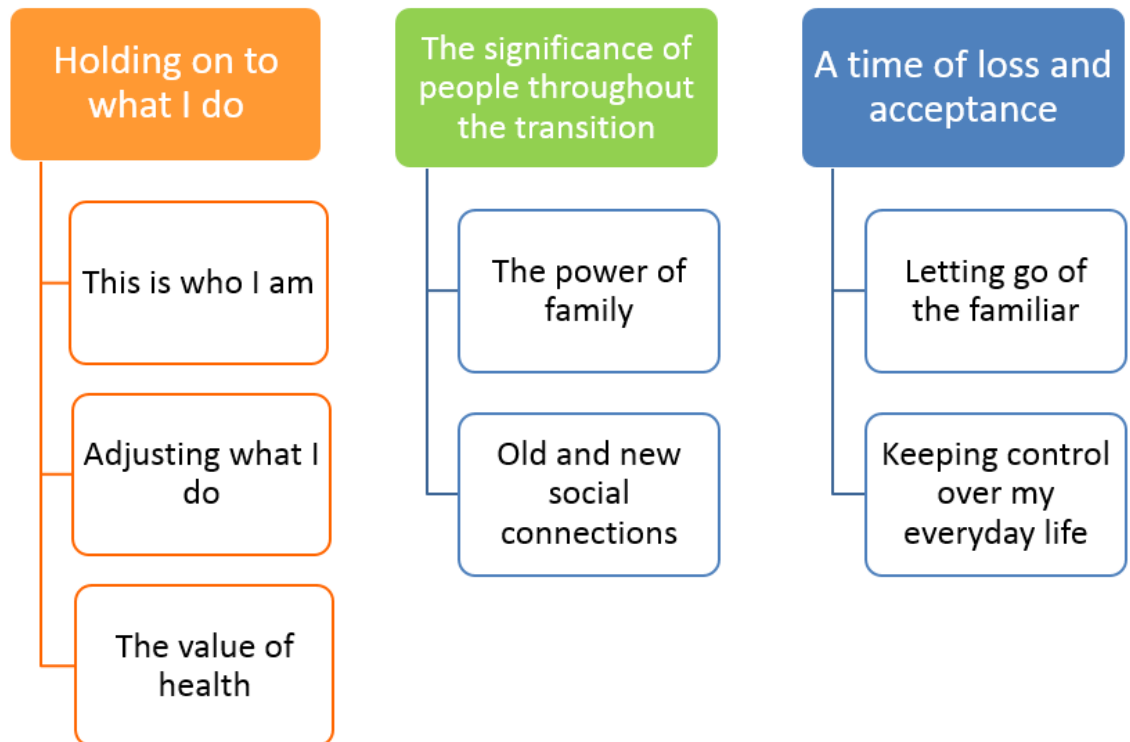
Elza's health problems remained unchanged through all three interviews; continually preventing her from adjusting to her new living environment. Although she spent much time reminiscing and thinking about her family, managing her health was her primary occupation after her care home move.

4.4.1 Findings across cases – Stage 2

Overarching themes were developed by looking across the Master table of themes for all six participants, focusing on data convergence and divergence among them. The three men and three women were all in the process of making a transition to living in a care home environment. The following overarching themes (Figure 6) represent the ways in which this transition influenced their experiences of engagement in meaningful occupation. Three

overarching themes, with related subthemes, are now detailed, together with the researcher's interpretations. These discussions are supported with participants' quotes, to further illustrate their experiences.

FIGURE 6: *Overarching themes with subthemes*



4.4.1.1 Overarching Theme: Holding on to what I do

FIGURE 7: *Holding on to what I do*



As noted in the introduction, the term ‘meaningful occupation’ refers to the activities in which people engage and which give meaning to their lives. All of the study participants described the importance of occupation in their lives; including the transition period. They all had particular occupations that they valued and perceived as important to their individual identities. These occupations were evident in their introductory narratives, at the time of their first interviews, and persisted throughout their experiences of transition into the care home. It was important for participants to hold on to their usual occupations,

during this transition, as it meant that they were also trying to maintain their identities as much as possible.

Most participants expressed concerns about their health; with staying healthy a priority even before they relocated. This issue became even more important after their care home move, as they saw other residents struggling with the impact of declining health on their everyday lives. Participants' everyday occupational engagement was challenged throughout the transition period. They were all prepared to make some adjustments, however, if doing so allowed them to maintain their meaningful occupations and remain independent.

This is who I am

It was important for all participants to give some personal background, a brief summary of themselves and their lives, during their first interviews. This sharing of information was usually initiated by them. It soon became evident that participants were actually explaining what they enjoyed doing and how that had changed over their lifetimes. Each of them described particular occupations, which they especially valued and which defined them. For example, Janez could not wait to visit his weekend cottage, where he had spent all of his free time before his care home move. He talked about spending time at the cottage in an endearing manner, which he illustrated by using diminutives for words such as '*flowers*', '*grass*' etc. Diminutives, in Slovenian, are indicated by adding a suffix to a noun, changing the meaning of the noun. The approach is usually used when a particular place or object is dear to the speaker.

'I was there last week [at the weekend cottage]... from Thursday on... for 5 days. It was 5 days of beautiful pleasure, you know. I was dealing a little bit with my flowers, and such things.' 'I was cutting the grass a bit...anyway...3 days of pleasure...' (Janez, 2nd interview, 363-366)

Janez tried to continue his regular visits to his weekend cottage, after he relocated, although this was influenced by his ability to drive. His decision to move to the care home coincided with his decision to stop driving. Although driving enabled him to visit his weekend cottage independently, he still decided to stop. This may mean that he saw his decision to move into the care home as the end of a certain period of his life. By the time of his third interview, Janez could see how these two meaningful occupations were connected. Although he was determined to pursue his relocation decision, he still expressed regrets about no longer having the freedom to drive. As he explained:

'That is the only reason why I miss my car. If I was bored, I just sat in my car and went up there for a few days. They do take me... but you depend on someone else.' (Janez, 3rd interview, 205-207)

Some participants expressed their most valued occupations through their perceptions of themselves. For example, Jelka considered herself *'made of a farmer's dough'*, a Slovenian proverb that she repeated several times during her interviews when describing herself. This metaphor is used to indicate that someone has farmers' values, such as productivity, ownership, financial stability, nature and hard work. Despite the fact that Jelka had never been a farmer, she was highly influenced by her background. She retained her productivity in retirement. Her main occupations were taking care of her home and looking after her husband after he had had a stroke. After she experienced

a fall, she decided to move her husband into a care home and to settle in herself in sheltered housing. It was then, when her identity was challenged through no longer engaging in productive occupations that gave meaning to her. The following quote is from her 1st interview, conducted when she was still living in sheltered housing.

'I never say why can't I be in my house...thank God I'm not...because I wouldn't be able to work. I'm aware I wouldn't be able to work...and I'm the kind of person that needs to work...I worked even after I retired...for 14 years after I retired.' (Jelka, 1st interview, 1087-1090)

Several study participants referred to productivity and a professional persona as important aspects of their identities. Their need to maintain links to their previous occupations came through strongly throughout the study interviews. The interviews also contained strong Slovenian cultural references, for example Jelka's comment about *'farmer's dough'*, indicating the value of hard work, which is considered part of Slovenian culture. The mentioned quotation was a way for Jelka to express distress. Although she said that it was better that she did not live in a house where she had to work, she also acknowledged her need to be productive. That is when she decided to follow her husband into the care home where she was able to get back at least some of her previous responsibilities. The transition period provided Jelka with a solution for holding on to her meaningful occupations.

Bor's strong professional identity informed his whole life. Having worked in the music industry, he considered himself an artist, belonging to a highly respected peer group. His wife had also been involved in the arts and their paths had crossed frequently in their everyday lives. The importance, for Bor, of to having

an opportunity to describe his professional life was especially evident in his first interview. He appeared to be unable to talk about his relocation experience without first outlining the background to his story. His transition was informed by reminiscence about his professional journey and awareness of his strong professional identity. His self-respect, in terms of his professional engagement, became even stronger after he had relocated. He was especially wary about engaging in any music-related activities, in the care home, that could potentially jeopardise his professional reputation.

'I was always very precise and I would usually give them a hard time...so I said...I can't work with these people, and I won't listen to them singing out of tune...' (Bor, 2nd interview, 295-297)

Bor appeared fearful of engaging in unsuccessful activities connected, in any way, to his professional background; choosing not to engage. Throughout the transition period, Bor also became increasingly conscious of his professional legacy; probably triggered by the relocation. For example, moving his work equipment and records made him nostalgic; leading to his recounting several anecdotes from his professional life.

Most participants were defined by their occupations throughout their lives; including their later lives and transitions to the care home environment. In contrast, Miha noted that he had taken up his most valued occupation in recent years, since his wife had died. This change had forced him to become more independent. Miha's most meaningful occupation was his morning walking routine; which he valued for making him feel independent and free. Miha's routine was adversely affected by his fall and subsequent care home move.

After relocating, Miha felt that his new, unfamiliar living environment ended his independence and consequently his meaningful occupation.

As mentioned above, all participants tried to retain the meaningful occupations that were challenged throughout the care home transition period. Their efforts were evident in the ways that they talked about themselves and their experiences. It was as if they were trying to persuade the interviewer that their activities made them the people that they were.

Adjusting what I do

All six study participants were in the process of adjusting their everyday occupations to their changing life circumstances, including moving to a care home and some of them experiencing health issues. Participants found their daily routines changed by the care home's timetable and routines. For example, Janez described changes to his morning routine as follows:

'That's why I said I feel lost. I'm lost in a way that I just can't find anything... I had a sequence for instance... I made myself breakfast in the morning, I took my medicine, then self care, you know. And so on. That's the case now. And I have to get used to it and that's the hardest.' (Janez, 2nd interview, 132-135)

Although he was talking about feeling 'lost', Janez did not relate this feeling to the care home's unfamiliar physical environment, but rather to his distress about changes to his daily routines. The care home's timetable required him to change the order of his morning activities, causing him a sense of loss; the loss being his previous morning routine.

The adjustment process was more difficult for participants who had to share their private space with other residents. For example, Dora had shared a double room temporarily, until a single room had become available. After moving to the latter, she described her experience as follows:

'I found it difficult to live because I didn't have my own life....but I had to adjust to the extent...that it wasn't possible. And now it is, and that's what matters.'
(Dora, 3rd interview, 145-146)

Dora felt that she had lost her everyday life in the process of adjusting her daily routines to those of her roommate. It is likely that Dora felt able to adjust her life to this extent only because she expected a single room to become available soon.

In terms of the physical environment, Miha found the adjustment most challenging because of his long-standing visual impairment (he had been blind for seventy years). He described his feeling that his living space had been reduced to the dimensions of his room, as he was unable to master the wider care home environment. His distress was further evident in the way that he spoke, with pauses and repetition of the same words and phrases.

Researcher: Which activity in a day is the most important to you now?

'..yes...yes... this is difficult now. I got used to a bit...so I can go out...here [outside the room]...and by the fence you know...'

'...It was easy at home, I could walk by myself....I could walk by myself...and I knew certain paths...I took my stick and went....' (Miha, 2nd interview, 213-217)

When Miha spoke of his adjustment process, he usually related the difficulties that he faced to the physical environment. This may indicate the importance of

independence before other aspects that were mentioned by other participants. Miha's daily routines were changed, in common with other participants, but his priorities appeared different.

Participants expected to have to adjust their everyday occupations and routines to some extent, when they relocated, and all later proved prepared to do so. While they were willing to accept some changes to their daily routines, however, they all tried to retain those occupations that were most meaningful to them.

The value of health

All participants gave their health high priority; choosing to engage in health-promoting occupations. Some already had health issues, but all saw old age as a time of declining health. This perception raised participants' awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle however; an awareness that became increasingly evident after their care home relocation. For example, before they relocated, ill-health had begun to interrupt daily routines and dominate everyday life for both Dora and Elza. They both cited ill-health as a major reason to move. Elza's urinary incontinence worsened, after she moved, to the extent that it began to occupy most of her time. At interview, she described feeling as if she was constantly busy with looking after herself:

'...I usually don't have breakfast because I have too much work with myself...so that I can at least sleep until 7 then....' (Elza, 2nd interview, 1292-1293)

The above quote shows that Elza was sometimes so busy looking after herself that it prevented her from assimilating into her new living environment. The

former became her primary occupation to the extent that all her other occupations were organised accordingly.

In similar fashion, Dora, had been admitted to the care home from hospital, following an operation for bowel cancer. After her move, she chose to look after her health by consciously engaging in health-promoting activities. The latter included preparing breakfast in her room and climbing the care home stairs just to maintain her level of daily physical activity. Dora was sometimes critical of the care home's services; seeing a healthy lifestyle as something for which she must take personal responsibility.

'...I have my own breakfast which I prepare by myself. How to say this....you know...the thing I'm experiencing here is the worst...in terms of healthy cooking for patients...' (Dora, 3rd interview, 150-152)

Both Elza and Dora were willing to sacrifice their other activities, in order to have the time to look after their health. This may be because they were aware of other care home residents' health-related struggles and feared to lose their own independence. Focusing on their health may also have provided an excuse to prolong the adjustment period. Both Elza and Dora appeared to spend more time looking after their health than was needed. It sometimes seemed that they needed this extra time in order to avoid making new social contacts and/or to postpone their assimilation into their new living environment. Looking after their health therefore became their main occupation.

In contrast, Jelka and Bor were little occupied with their health because they were both moving to the care home due to their partners' ill-health and not their

own. As a result, they both took on a carer role, which helped them to remain occupied during their own adjustment period. For example, as Bor explained:

'...my daughters said to leave the work to the nursing staff...but I said...by the time I find the nurse, I'm already done, ha ha...I'm done...and then I...the only time that gets lonely is in the evening....' (Bor, 2nd interview, 193-195)

Bor's comment suggests that he preferred caring for his wife because he doubted staff members' work. Caring for his wife also helped him to occupy his time after he relocated. It was not until after his wife had died, during his third interview, Bor described engaging in a new range of care home activities.

The study participants were knowledgeable about the need to look after their health and chose to engage in health-promoting occupations. They also saw some occupations as influencing their health, because they enjoyed them. For example, Janez said that being in his weekend cottage's setting enhanced his health, as follows:

...nature, greenness, fresh air...I can just feel how this benefits my health. The air...1000m..so I love being up there [at his weekend cottage] (Janez, 1st interview, 201-202)

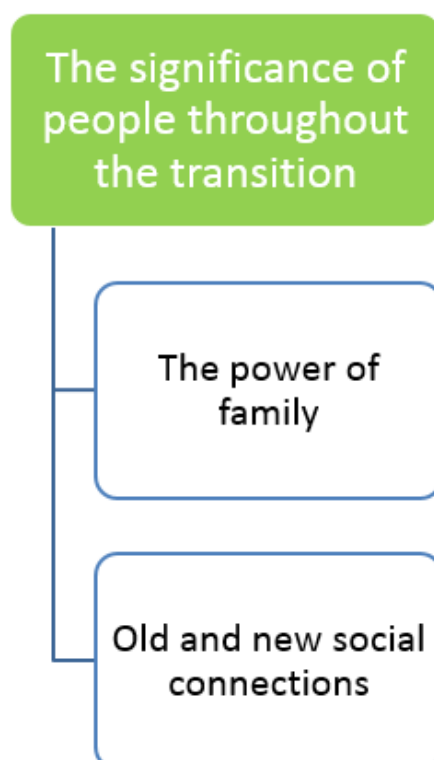
Dora also wished to start cycling again because she expected powerful benefits, beyond physical health, from doing so. She even blamed her inability to cycle for her ill-health, noting:

'I run away by bicycle and I came back, I was cured on a bicycle. I couldn't cycle for one year because of my knee,... and I got ill, I got this...colon cancer...in one year.' (Dora, 2nd interview, 1212-1214)

In similar fashion, Bor referred to music as '*his life*', Jelka saw some of her occupations as nurturing '*her soul*' and Miha felt more independent during his morning walks. In their own ways, each of these participants linked an opportunity to engage in meaningful occupations to feeling healthier. The awareness of the link between engagement in enjoyable occupations and feeling healthier further motivated them to maintain these occupations and consequently their health.

4.4.1.2 Overarching Theme: The significance of people throughout the transition

Figure 8: *The significance of people throughout the transition*



Although individuals' experience of transition, on moving into a care home, might be seen as solitary, this was not the case for the six study participants. Indeed, all of the latter spent significant amounts of time maintaining establishing connections with other people throughout this transition. Moreover, the transition process made them more aware of the importance of occupations involving other people, so that they became selective about how, and with whom, they spend their time.

The power of family

Family played a powerful role throughout participants' lives, including their later lives and care home transitions. In terms of their occupational engagement, most participants' meaningful occupations began in childhood. Some participants referred explicitly to their childhoods, and/or parents, in describing their roots' life-long influence. In later life, they noted how spending time with their families, and being involved in their children's and grandchildren's lives, became one of their most meaningful occupations. Family ties often seemed to represent stability, and the absence of change, during participants' care home transitions. Those participants with children and grandchildren felt safe, knowing that they could count on their families' support to face their new occupational engagement challenges. For example, Janez emphasised several times, at interview, that his son had enabled him to continue to undertake his weekly routines, and to visit his weekend place on a regular basis, once he had stopped driving:

'Yes, I still go, but my son would pick me up. We usually go on Mondays but I rescheduled today and we'll go tomorrow. We'll visit the grave...and then what I

really look forward to, is visiting XXXXXX [supermarket] where I can look around a bit.' (Janez, 3rd interview, 53-56)

Janez enjoyed spending time with his son as well as valuing his help. Dora and Bor also referred to the meaning of time spent with their respective families; seeing them as a form of unchanging security. Bor's family visited him more regularly after his wife died. He described his relationship with his family in a very spontaneous manner. Spending time with them had always been meaningful to him, but this became even more apparent at the time of his last interview.

'Many times...they're going to pick me up today too...they [his family] put me in a wheelchair and off we go...to the xxxx...and around...Yes, yes...my daughter said...if the weather is good, make sure you're ready...I'll pick you up on Saturday...and we're off. To our weekend cottage, you know...enough space there...and if the young ones come...it's even more fun [smiling]' (Bor, 3rd interview, 1104-1108)

In contrast to the above, other participants felt that their family connections had been weakened during the care home transition period. Elza and Jelka both felt that they were detaching from their previous sense of family. Both women had spent their lives looking after their families and family homes. Caring for their grandchildren had been an integral part of their daily or weekly routines. Hosting family meals and organising family celebrations had also been roles of major importance to them; reinforcing their sense of family. It is possible that their more recent sense of loss came from their inability to continue to engage in the above occupations from their care home. As Jelka, who had moved into sheltered housing and then the care home, explained:

'The days were busier, I had to take care of everything...breakfast, lunch had to be made...and now it doesn't matter...I make myself some pasta with sauce and that's it. Before....I had to make soup and all....and I was looking after grandchildren too. It was always busy at the house....and now there's loneliness...not anyone around.' (Jelka, 1st interview, 314-318)

The above quote illustrates Jelka's feelings of loss about losing her housewife role. Moving into sheltered housing, and then the care home, deprived her of the meaning that she had earlier experienced from looking after her grandchildren and family home.

Miha, in contrast, needed his relatives' practical help in order to engage in his meaningful occupations. Although he valued spending time with them, they mostly served him as helpers and his expectations usually went beyond simply spending time in their company:

'...she might come, I don't know...if she comes...if my niece comes...I gave her my mobile phone so that she can check if it needs repairing or if I need a new one...(Miha, 3rd interview, 904-906)

Both Miha and Dora had less regular contact with his family than did those participants who had children and grandchildren. At the time of her last interview, Dora was very explicit about the meaning of spending time with her family. This suggested that the transition had made her realise what she truly valued, with spending time with her family as one of her most meaningful occupations.

Most participants were also occupied with ensuring their families' well-being, including the issue of inheritance. Indeed, some participants saw the latter as

crucial, before they could settle down to their new living environments. As Elza explained:

'My thoughts are occupied with this, you have to understand...

Researcher: 'Do you find it burdening?'

'Absolutely, cause everything was gained through hard work...and I want it to come into the right hands...that the children will...one thing cannot be split into two, and I want it to be right for everyone and that all of them would be happy. I still need to arrange this...(Elza, 3rd interview, 789-794)

Elza's response may be context specific. Under Slovenia's previous socialist government, most people built their own homes, with room enough for the next generation to share. Most citizens therefore lived in the same house for sixty or more years of their lives and were unused to moving home. This traditional pattern of living is still commonplace in Slovenia. Looking after their properties was a very meaningful occupation for most of the participants in this study. Passing their homes on to the next generation was like passing their meaningful occupations on to their children and grandchildren. Participants saw the area as challenging; considering how to best divide their belongings in order to maintain good relationships with and between their descendants.

Old and new social connections

Participants described their family connections as the most meaningful, but valued their other social contacts too. This may be linked to their desire to share their transition only with selected people. Some participants had a stronger need to interact with people outside their families than others; for a variety of reasons. Some tried to juggle two worlds; keeping up both with their old social

contacts and establishing new care home ones. For example, Bor had always shared meals, drinks, conversations and/or jokes as a significant part of his personal and professional social life. He was therefore especially pleased to meet up his ex-colleague, whose company he enjoyed, after he relocated.

‘Yes, yes...I need it...because I lack this so much, if I don’t have contact with people, you know. After lunch me and xxx ...we chat for 3 hours...especially if we don’t have to rush anywhere.....and then we go our separate ways...’ (Bor, 3rd interview, 803-805)

Although Bor expressed a general need for social activities, spending time with this particular colleague held especial meaning as the two men discussed profession-related topics. Bor’s need reached beyond simple social contact; seeking meaningful conversation with like-minded people. Dora was also very selective about her time; feeling unable to communicate with many of her fellow residents. She had chosen to move into this particular care home because she had already known people who lived there and hoped to spend time with them. As she explained:

‘They told me there’s this newly-built care home nearby...but I said ok, the walls might be prettier, but I have my friend from high school here...and my cousin... she has Alzheimer though, it’s hard...but still, we at least know each other.’ (Dora, 1st interview, 1062-1064)

In contrast to other participants, Miha was not very selective in terms of his time; seeking not so much to have meaningful interactions as to enlist their help to engage in his everyday occupations. As a result, Miha felt fortunate to meet a former acquaintance who offered to spend time with him. This man both helped

him to familiarise himself with his new environment and to engage such meaningful activities as taking walks and visiting the nearby church.

‘Yes, if XXX comes...then I go downstairs....or if I have a visitor...then I’m able to go downstairs for a cup of coffee...’ (Miha, 3rd interview, 288-289)

Miha had relied on others even before his move. Their role assumed even greater importance once he was living in the care home. Miha’s contacts were not always available when he expected them to be, which he sometimes found hard to accept. This discrepancy proved more challenging after he moved because his unfamiliarity with the care home’s physical environment made him unable to engage in meaningful occupations on his own.

Participants also tried to keep up with social contacts who had played important parts in their occupational routines before their relocation. For example, Elza had a group of friends with whom she met regularly before she moved. At the time of her last interview, she acknowledged that varied health and life issues, including the death of one group member, had prevented them from meeting in person. Janez also mentioned frequently that he saw old age as a time when peers died; referring specifically to the loss of some of his old friends.

In contrast, Bor managed to stay in touch with a group of friends, with whom he usually shared his morning coffee routine when still living at home. He expressed his excitement about their potential visit, saying:

‘...yes they haven’t been yet but they already announced their visit. Ha ha...5 or 6 of them, that will be a tough day...hahaha...I came home the other day and of course I went to say hi...and she said [one of his friends].. how are your

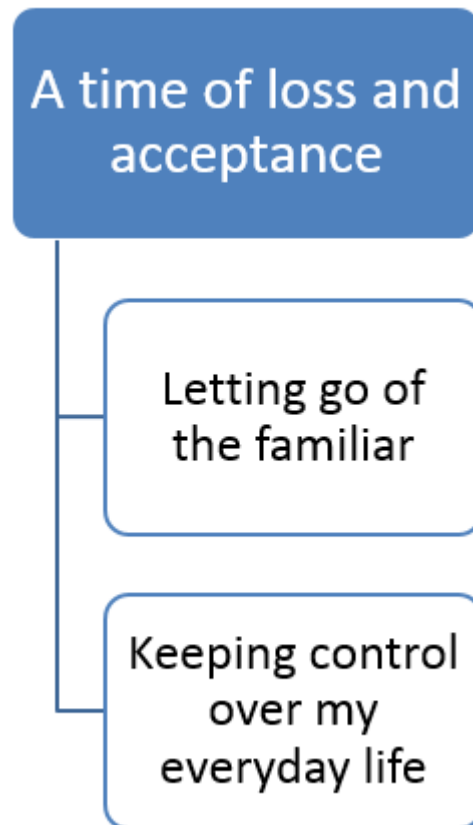
mornings? Our morning coffee has stopped now. I said how did this happen? You're not around [she replied]. She said...we all listened to your stories before and joked around...' (Bor, 2nd interview, 1186-1191)

Bor's quote indicates that he had played a pivotal role in maintaining the regular morning coffee routine with his friends when he still lived at home. Although he was occupied with caring for his wife after he moved, Bor still missed the chance to socialise regularly with this particular friendship group. It was particularly important to him that his friends acknowledged both his original role and the disruption that had occurred to their morning routine since he had moved. His friends' acknowledgment appeared to help Bor to deal with losing his meaningful morning routine.

In summary, although participants' new living environment offered them opportunities to make new social connections, they mostly valued their privacy and expressed the need for more time in order to make meaningful new friendships. Sharing meals sometimes resulted in participants developing new links. These situations were unplanned, however, rather than strategic, and happened spontaneously over time.

4.4.1.3 Overarching Theme: A time of loss and acceptance

Figure 9: *A time of loss and acceptance*



Participants' experience of occupational engagement was closely linked to the places in which they had lived and spent time, throughout their lives, as well as their sense of perceived autonomy. Their transition necessarily required them to leave the previously familiar places in which they had lived and been active. They also had to contend with a new living environment whose potential challenges included changes to their sense of autonomy. Participants found the latter challenging; attributing their feelings both to their institutional transition and to old age in general.

Letting go of the familiar

All study participants acknowledged that their care home transition had been made more challenging by the fact that it had happened alongside the ageing process. The latter had often made them let go of some aspects of their lives, including their health, their homes, and/or their spouses and friends. All of these changing circumstances influenced participants' occupational engagement and their care home relocation further contributed to this unavoidable process. Elza illustrated this situation by saying:

Researcher: How do you usually spend your day?

'That's...that's very much related to health...and age. Very much...and of course it's declining. It doesn't improve...everything is going down. And even if you had a wide range of responsibilities and friendships and all of that...life goes on, and then this circle, you don't even realise how it narrows...everything...and it narrows. Yes...it narrows into this phase between before and what's going to happen next.' (Elza, 1st interview, 42-47).

Elza's 'narrowing circle' may refer to everything with which she had engaged throughout her life; linked to her roles, her occupations and her social interactions. Her words show her feeling that her circle had narrowed to the point where she felt captured in a space between the past and the future; a feeling that perhaps triggered her care home move. In similar fashion, Janez described this unfamiliar place, between the past and the future, as a time to reflect on his past and future life. He also addressed his need to be '*doing*', indicating the importance of occupational engagement in his life, when he said:

'...you think what you're gonna do, what you did and all that...., so it's really hard to tell. Mostly, mostly you feel lost. I just can't find myself.' (Janez, 2nd interview, 16-17)

Not all participants articulated their transition process in the same ways as Elza and Janez, but all spoke of the unavoidable process of ageing and loss. They noted that the important aspect of this process was to be able to keep at least some control over it.

The meanings that participants gave to their occupations often depended on the places in which they had undertaken them. For example, Dora enjoyed cycling in the area around her home, Janez enjoyed gardening at his weekend cottage and Jelka's domestic activities were only meaningful to her if she did them in her old home. Participants' care home moves had meant that they had had to let go of these places; thereby depriving some previously meaningful occupations of their meanings. The above places evoked memories every time that participants visited them after their relocation; causing feelings of nostalgia, for their past lives, and sometimes emotional distress. For example, Bor did not want to visit his family's weekend cottage after he and his wife moved into the care home because they had shared time and varied activities together there. It was not until after his wife had died, that he allowed his children to take him to the cottage. He illustrated his experience as follows:

'...and then I took the chair up to the hill...and I looked across the valley, and I was enjoying the sun and so on...and that broke me...and I said let's go, let's go...if I ever come up here again, I'll always come with company.' (Bor, 3rd interview, 350-352)

Bor's experience had clearly distressed him; causing him to cry and say that it had 'broken' him. The view across the valley had brought back past memories of having spent time at the cottage with his wife and family. His awareness that those times had now passed caused a sense of loss that went far beyond the loss of his wife and this upset him. The feelings of loss brought about by Bor's care home transition may have caused him to grieve.

All six participants expressed a sense of loss in different ways. For example, Janez used a metaphor to illustrate his feelings in his new living environment, comparing his experience to '*solitary confinement*' and to a Slovenian castle located in front of a cave. His comment about solitary confinement referred not only to his room, but to the loss of such elements as his autonomy, his home and his 'driver' role; all caused by his care home transition. His use of the Slovenian metaphor of a castle in front of a cave tried to convey his feeling of waiting for death; waiting to fall into the cave.

In addition to the above, most participants were in the process of losing some of the occupational roles that they had held whilst living at home. For example, Dora had always been very active with one of her local societies/clubs. She had tried to retain her role, for as long as possible after her care home move, but had ended up partially letting it go. As she explained:

'I said to the president [of the association]...I will, I will...I'm not going to leave you....I'll find my way, through e-mails and I'll stay in contact...' (Dora, 2nd interview, 912-913).

Dora's comment that 'she would not leave' suggests that she felt that she was losing her role and was trying to hold on to it. The ways in which Dora's new living environment impacted upon her activities was clear, throughout her interviews. By the time of her third interview, she was uncertain whether she had made the right decision by moving or not.

Other participants were less resistant; accepting their new living environment more quickly. For instance, Elza soon identified herself with other residents and began to feel part of the care home community. This was evident in the way that she included other residents in her accounts of her everyday life which often used terms such as 'we are' or 'we need'. Another example was Miha, who accepted that the care home was the best solution for him. His acceptance may have been facilitated by his religious beliefs, as he acknowledged several times the importance of faith in facing life's challenges.

Keeping control over my everyday life

All study participants found it important to control their everyday occupational engagement, even before they entered the care home. They were all conscious that this might have to change, however, due to their circumstances, old age and/or health. Based on this awareness, they had all applied for a care home place years before their actual moves; seeing this as a demonstration of their autonomy and retained control over their potential transition.

'I went in the year of 88...or 89...I went and applied for a place here. They all said...are you crazy? But things happen and we really are the first ones here...you know...I had my job [healthcare assistant]...and I heard different

things...and I thought...anything can happen and by applying I at least have some kind of certainty...' (Jelka, 3rd interview, 127-131)

Participants' advance application for a care home place, and subsequent retention of that place until it was needed, supported a very important occupation for them, later in life. The interviews showed that their relocations had been carefully planned, although there was usually an event that triggered the final decision to move at a particular point in time. For example, both Jelka and Bor decided to move because their spouses were already living in the care home due to ill-health. Jelka and Bor decided to join them, after being offered places; perhaps due to fear of losing the chance. Other participants experienced personal health issues, but decided to relocate whilst they were still independent and had control over their occupational engagement.

After relocating, participants reported several occasions when their control over their occupational engagement had been challenged and/or compromised. This was especially evident in everyday situations. In these situations, most participants tried to retain their meaningful daily routines and to avoid becoming part of the care home group. For example, Janez explained his experience of a group activity as follows:

'For instance, it bothers me... I was invited by a therapist and I went. There was this table in the shape of a letter L. There were three women residents, you know, and they were passing the ball to each other...but for me this was new, even though I saw it on TV many times, how they animate people and all...but for me it was too soon. And for me the ball isn't something to roll across the table...Yes....' (Janez, 2nd interview, 189-194).

Although Janez said that he needed more time to adjust, before becoming involved in organised care home activities, his comment seems to reflect his perception of the activity on offer. He appears to have felt that it was inappropriate to him and that his individual needs were being generalised down to meet the needs of the other residents. He avoided organised care home activities as a result, continuing his usual morning exercises, instead, as a meaningful part of his long-standing daily routine.

In similar fashion, Dora and Elza decided not to attend breakfast in the care home dining room. Although this was partly due to their health, it was still important for them to be able to make this decision. Both women reported that their privacy had been interrupted, on several occasions, by care home staff or residents, over which they had no control. Dora and Elza valued being able to make small decisions about their everyday lives; outside of the collective experience at times. All participants were very selective about engaging in new occupations offered by the care home. To be accepted, the latter had to be related to participants' meaningful occupations, even if they differed a little. For example, Bor started to get involved in some woodwork, which had always been a part of his life, as follows:

'I started working downstairs in the workshop [arts and crafts group] and I haven't finished yet...I have a lot to do by the end of the year. They have some sort of rehabilitation group...you know...they knit and sing and all sorts...but I'm making this bird box for my daughter, for the balcony.' (Bor, 3rd interview, 138-141)

Bor suggested the importance of his control over this particular activity in a subtle way. His comments suggest that he considered himself to be outside the

group, as he was the only one making a bird box. The above quote also indicates the perceived meaning of this occupation for him; the bird box being a present for his daughter.

4.4.2 Summary of findings

The findings highlighted the importance of the participants' continuous engagement in meaningful occupation, which contributed to the adjustment to a new living environment. The latter posed many challenges onto the participants' previous routines and their meaningful occupations helped them deal with those challenges. Although the participants strived to maintain their previous social contacts, the findings highlighted the meaning of family-related occupations and family atmosphere. However, the participants expressed needing more time before making new relationships within a care home. The findings also indicated the important role of places the participants belonged to, which gave several meanings to their everyday engagement in occupation.

4.5 Discussion – Stage 2

The second stage of this research study aimed to explore and understand the impact of transition into a care home on the occupational engagement of individual older Slovenians. The findings highlighted that these individuals perceived their engagement in meaningful occupations as an important part of their identities, which they strived to maintain throughout their lives, including during their transition to care home living. Although participants found that they

had to adjust some of their meaningful occupations and routines, the meanings that they experienced in these occupations contributed to this continuity. The findings further indicated that a range of significant people and places shaped participants' occupational choices and the meanings that they attached to their occupations. These findings, together with the existing literature will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.5.1 Occupational identity and continuity

The participants in this research expressed their identities through their experiences of occupational engagement. They all valued, and tried to maintain particular occupations, such as driving a car, caring for their family and taking morning walks, which gave meaning to their lives and a sense of self. These findings are in line with Christiansen (1999), who stated that people's unique identities are built through what they do, enabling them to create meaningful lives and be well. The concept of 'identity' is considered a 'powerful construct' (Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx, 2012), but critiqued in the literature as poorly defined (Rattansi and Phoenix, 2005). As mentioned previously, the concept of 'occupational identity' was developed within occupational therapy literature to describe people's identities through their engagement in occupations (Kielhofner, 2008, p.106).

The importance of occupational identity was echoed by the current research participants, who attempted to maintain who they were by engaging in personally meaningful occupations. For example, one participant who undertook social advocacy activities in her local community claimed that it was her 'way of

life'. After she relocated to a care home, she began advocating for the home's residents, which helped her to maintain her most meaningful occupation as part of her identity. A UK-based study by Lee, Simpson and Froggatt (2013) similarly indicated the importance to older adults of maintaining their identities after relocating to a care home, but this study did not focus on participants' occupational engagement and was conducted in a different socio-cultural context to the current study.

Furthermore, the current study findings indicated the paramount importance for participants of maintaining a continuous experience of meaning throughout their transition to care home life. Frankl (2000) notes that the experience of meaning is important throughout challenging life events, with older people's relocation into a care home being one such event (Walker, Cox Curry and Hogstel, 2007). When people experience meaning in the activities that they undertake, it helps to preserve their identities (Ikiugu, 2005). Engaging in personally meaningful occupations is known to have a positive impact on older people's health and well-being (Clark *et al.*, 2011; Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Liddle *et al.*, 2013). Enabling older people to continue to engage in such occupations, after relocating into a care home, is known to help them to adjust to their new institutional environment (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008). Although the latter research was conducted in Australia, and thus in a different cultural context, the same link was identified by the older Slovenians taking part in the current study. In contrast, another Australian study by Walker and McNamara (2013) found that older adults moving into retirement villages perceived their relocation as an opportunity to engage in new occupations. This difference may reflect the fact

that retirement villages are less institutionalised than care homes; offering older adults more opportunities to maintain their autonomy in their everyday lives.

4.5.2 Occupational identity and change

The current study participants tried to maintain their unique occupational identities, throughout their transition to care home living, alongside changes in their everyday occupational engagement. All participants perceived alterations to their usual daily routines challenging, as noted elsewhere (Harnett, 2010; Eyres *et al.*, 2012). For example, ethnographic study by Harnett (2010) found that any special requirements voiced by the 14 care home residents were seen to disrupt or disturb staff members' work routines. The fact that the current study participants found less problems adjusting to care home staff's work routines than they had anticipated may reflect their continued independence in self-care. The older Slovenians that took part in the current study noted that their co-residents' routines had a greater impact on their lives, than the staff routines, especially if they had to share their room and/or bathroom facilities. Not being able to engage in their previous routines gave participants feelings of unfamiliarity and distress.

Despite the above, participants recognized that their care home's timetables adversely affected their occupations; for example meal times influenced all participants' daily routines. Mali (2008) investigated Slovenian care homes' provisions, using Goffman's concept of total institution (Goffman, 1961). Mali found that, although the homes had numerous rules and routines in place, they were sometimes adapted to meet individual residents' needs. However, Mali's

study did not focus on residents' transition period. Her data were also collected from staff and relatives, as well as residents, which may have skewed the study findings. Further research by Cooney (2011), indicated that older care home residents who were able to continue their daily routines developed a greater sense of 'home', in their new living environments, due to increased feelings of security and predictability. People's everyday routines are considered an important part of their identity, representing the 'familiar' in their everyday lives (Hasselkus, 2011). One participant in the current research described the impact of change on his daily routines by saying that he felt 'lost', in his new morning routine, in the absence of the familiar.

Engaging in familiar everyday routines is considered a prerequisite for undertaking other, potentially more meaningful occupations (Hasselkus, 2011). However, the current study found the opposite. Participants used personally meaningful activities to help them to overcome their distress when they were unable to engage in their usual daily routines. The participant, who said that he felt 'lost', due to the changes made to his morning routine, emphasised the importance of visiting his weekend cottage during his transition period. Gamliel and Hazan (2006) assert that care home residents may seek to follow their daily routines and hobbies rigidly, as these are the only activities over which they can still exercise control. Although this may be the case, later in the process of transition, the current study focused only on the first six months of participants' adjustment. More time may be required to fully adapt old routines into new ones.

The simultaneous loss of several roles was another challenge that the current study participants had to face, on moving into their care homes. For example, one participant ceased to be both a housekeeper and a driver after his relocation. Previous studies have indicated the importance of continuity between individuals' past and present roles (Minney and Ranzijn, 2016), with the older adults in a study by Mulry (2012) indicating that adjusting to a new living environment was more successful if they were able to maintain their previous roles. However, time may be needed if older people are to readjust their roles, throughout their transition to care home living. Social psychologists argue that individuals' identities change according to the contexts in which they find themselves (Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx, 2012); as was evident with the current research participants. Goffman (1961) argued that, despite their rigidity, total institutions represent a place of identity construction. Mali (2008) did find some similarities between Slovenian care homes and Goffman's concept of a total institution. Although the participants in the current research perceived the process of adjusting to a care home environment challenging, it was evident at the time of their last interviews that they had started to develop new roles and daily routines to replace their previous ones. Despite this, this group of older Slovenians still tried to engage in the occupations that they found personally most meaningful.

4.5.3 Occupational engagement and health

All of the current study participants valued maintaining their health and independence, although not all had relocated due to health issues. Some participants perceived that they experienced better health when they engaged

in their most enjoyable occupations. Thus, one participant claimed that his eyesight was better when he was visiting his weekend cottage than in the care home, and another said that some occupations were 'for her soul'; making her feel better. Such statements echo the occupational science evidence linking engagement in meaningful occupations to health and well-being (Clark *et al.*, 1997, 2012; Wilcock and Hocking, 2015; Liddle *et al.*, 2013; Bedding and Sadlo, 2008). However, the current study participants also purposefully engaged in physical and/or outdoor activities, and healthy eating, which they believed helped them to enhance and maintain their health. A study by Minney and Ranzijn (2016) similarly highlighted older residents' purposeful engagement in activities organised within their care home to promote active ageing. Such activities reflect the philosophy of the World Health Organisation's active ageing policy (WHO, 2002, p.17), which encourages older adults to make 'personal efforts to adopt positive personal practices at all stages of life'. In contrast, only one of the current study participants chose to engage in the care home organized activities; the others preferring to look after their health in their own time and in their own ways. This difference may reflect participants' desire to maintain control over their own health and their everyday occupations; as evidenced elsewhere (Falk *et al.*, 2012; Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008). Care homes that help their residents to keep control over their daily activities, promote their autonomy and successful adjustment to institutional living (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Brownie *et al.*, 2014).

4.5.4 Connection with family

Family-related occupations were seen as particularly important, in the current study; potentially reflecting the core value given to family life in Slovenia (Kuhar and Nastran Ule, 2002). Participants perceived their families as sources of help and security, but also perceived themselves continuing to contribute to their families. For example, several participants received their families' help with the practicalities of their relocation but also attended family celebrations and/or spent time with their grandchildren or great-grandchildren. In some socio-cultural contexts, the collective aspect of occupation is more fully expressed than in others, with people finding meaning in activities that engender a sense of belonging, connection and contributing to others (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009; Hammell and Iwama, 2012). Occupations, fostering connections with others were found as important to Slovenians in previous studies (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002).

Family relationships became ever more important to participants throughout their transitions into a care home. A Slovenian study by Kornhauser and Mali (2013) also identified older people's perceived value of continued contacts with family members after the relocation into a care home. In the latter study, this contact took the form of regular visits and/or help with aspects of the formal care home arrangements; also described by participants in the current study. Bonder (2006) also highlighted the importance, for older adults, of continued engagement in family-related occupations; emphasising the importance of reciprocal family interactions. Such findings seem to echo Nyman and colleagues' (2014) concept of 'togetherness', in which reciprocal relationships

enable people to contribute to each other in varied ways (Nyman, Josephsson and Isaksson, 2014).

Two of the current study's female participants reported a sense of loss at their inability to continue to look after their families since their relocation. Women in Slovenia are more heavily involved in domestic occupations than men (Boškič *et al.*, 2012), reflecting the life experiences of the two female participants above. A study by Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson (2002) noted that, in Slovenia, two family generations often live in separate flats in the same house, leading to older people being involved closely in their children's and grandchildren's lives. This living arrangement, and subsequent involvement, was also reported by some of the participants in the current study. Older care home residents' ability to maintain their past relationships and roles was shown to be of paramount importance for the care home residents in previous studies (Minney and Ranzijn, 2016). In the latter study, residents found that they could not always continue to fulfil their previous roles, with regard to family engagements, after their relocation.

Two of the current study participants moved into care homes to join their spouses. One of these participants went on to actively care for her husband, but she did not see this as a burden since it helped her to resume some of her former activities. Both of the latter couples had experienced health issues, before their relocations, which had disrupted the occupations that they had previously shared. In order to benefit from the reciprocal behaviour, mutually established goals and shared meaning of co-occupations, the parties concerned must engage in the shared occupation at the same time (Pickens and Pizur-

Barnekow, 2009). The study participant whose wife had died during the period of his transition to care home living reflected particularly on the meaningful co-occupations that they had shared. Both he and his wife had had a life-long involvement in the entertainment industry; a main part of their shared occupational lives. This finding links well with the concept of 'couple identity', which sees individuals start to perceive themselves as part of a single entity (Scabini and Manzi, 2012). However, a couple identity as part of an individual identity changes with different life transitions (Scabini and Manzi, 2012), which was also the case for this couple after the relocation into a care home. After his wife died, this man became more engaged in the care home's organised activities and in life in the care home in general.

The participants in the current research also described the importance of a family atmosphere to them and of being a continuing part of their families' lives. These feelings became ever more evident throughout participants' transition periods. Scabini and Manzi (2012, p. 567) discussed the concept of family identity where 'relationship binds people together over time, even without their being aware'. This might help to explain the circumstances of the six study participants who raised this issue; their care home moves raising their awareness of the importance of their families and their sense of family. One participant expressed this sentiment by saying that she 'finds herself' when she is with her family. Family-related activities appear to form an important part of this participant's personal identity (Kielhofner, 2008); the care home relocation raising her awareness of her family's significance.

4.5.5 Connection with other people

Participants appeared less interested in maintaining their social contacts outside their care homes, throughout their transition period, than has been reported elsewhere. Participants in other studies have emphasised the importance of continuing their previous social interactions after relocating to a care home (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Cutchin, Marshall and Aldrich, 2010; Johnson and Bibbo, 2014). The participants in the current research were not actively involved in making new contacts and were selective about the people with whom they chose to spend their time. Some participants said that they had found it challenging to identify other like-minded residents. Similar results were reported by Lee *et al.* (2013) whose care home resident participants found it easier to communicate with staff members than their co-residents. Lee and colleagues' participants felt that they had nothing in common with their fellow care home residents. Such perceptions were also shared by some of the current study participants. In a study by Bergland and Kirkevold (2007) peer relationships were only seen as important by care home residents, if they were experienced as meaningful.

In the current study, participants were selective about the people with whom they chose to spend their time, within the care home. This finding concurs with the Theory of Gerotranscendence (Tornstam, 1999), which suggests that older people become more selective in their choice of activities over time (Hyse and Tornstam, 2009). This theory refers to the developmental process of living into old age (Wadensten, 2007), however, rather than the process of making the transition to care home living. Despite this, this theory could still have some

relevance, as moving towards gerotranscendence involves changes to people's personal identity in later life (Tornstam, 1999). By becoming more selective in the occupations that the participants in this research chose to engage in, some of the current study participants appeared to experience a re-formulation of their identities (Unruh, 2004).

By the time of their last interviews, some of the current study participants had formed new friendships; suggesting that they had needed time to adjust to their new living environments before developing their social connections. A study by Jolanki and Vilkkko (2015) reported that residents developed a sense of 'belonging' by sharing activities and a living environment with like-minded others. Some of the current study participants perceived meal times as good opportunities to develop new contacts. Bundgaard (2005) also found that sharing meals contributed to a sense of home and belonging to a community. Alternatively, the current study participants' reticence and/or selectivity, in develop new social contacts, may have reflected their perception that they did not, as yet, 'belong', during their transition.

Instead of seeking new social contacts, the participants felt more connected with their families; focusing their time and attention on maintaining their family relationships and engaging in family-related occupations. Wilcock and Hocking (2015) linked 'belonging' to a sense of well-being and longevity, with a lack of belonging risking people's health (Hammell, 2014). Care home residents have seen social interactions as important in a number of other studies (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Cutchin, Marshall and Aldrich, 2010; Johnson and Bibbo, 2014). The current research findings suggest that a period of adjustment is

needed before some new care home residents feel free to develop new social connections.

4.5.6 The influence of ‘place’ on occupation

Most of the participants expressed a sense of loss, in relation to their familiar environments and possessions, indicating a link between their personally meaningful occupations and routines, and the locations or ‘places’ in which they belonged. The concept of place has a significant role in creating meaning in occupations (Rowles, 2008; Heatwole Shank and Cutchin, 2010). This link is reflected in transactional perspectives of occupation, which emphasise the interconnectedness of people and places, with occupation as the centre of this relationship (Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006). Other studies have acknowledged the meaning and importance of ‘home’, for older people, (Haak *et al.*, 2007; Dahlin-Ivanoff *et al.*, 2007); sentiments echoed by the current study participants. The latter described their enjoyment of familiar surroundings, such as their family houses or weekend cottages, where they could engage in everyday activities and spend time with their family and friends. Wiles *et al.* (2011) found that older people were not only attached to their physical environments, but also felt connected to their social environments and communities. Moving into a care home has been found to affect older women’s engagement in occupation adversely (Heatwole Shank and Cutchin, 2010); an outcome also expressed by participants in the current study.

Throughout their transition periods, several of the current study participants made regular visits to their previous home environments; seemingly preventing

them from adjusting to their new living situations. One female participant reflected on her recent visit by saying she had everything in her original home environment and remembered listening to the birds and planting pine trees there years earlier. People's connectedness and belonging to a place have also been considered in terms of nature (Hammell, 2014). When older people first move into care homes, their experiences of 'place' may be superficial; a phenomenon that Relph (1976) described as 'placelessness'. One of the current study participants used the term 'solitary confinement', to describe his feelings at this point, which could be an illustration of feeling 'placeless'. In similar fashion, one of the participants in a study by Lee, Simpson and Froggatt (2013) used the term 'prison' to refer to the care home. Such terminology could be linked to the previously mentioned lack of belonging to a new living environment, during a transition period.

The current study participants expressed difficulties developing a sense of 'home' in their new living environments; related closely to their usual daily routines and personally meaningful occupations. One participant said that he felt 'lost' regarding the changes to his morning routine, but this feeling also related to a 'loss' of his home bathroom, in which his original routine had taken place. Existing evidence highlights the meaning of 'home' for older people in terms of providing a sense of familiarity and independence (Haak *et al.*, 2007; Dahlin-Ivanoff *et al.*, 2007). Older people's independence is enhanced when the demands of their physical environments match their needs and abilities (Nordin *et al.*, 2016). This link was especially evident in the case of one of the current study participant, who was visually impaired and identified his original home with a sense of independence and security.

Participants eventually increased their attachment to their new living environments, in the current study, by maintaining their previous, or developing new occupations, as well as by personalising their rooms. The literature distinguishes between the concepts of 'space' and 'place' (Wiles *et al.*, 2009). A 'space' is described as a 'neutral, pre-given medium, a tabula rasa' which can be transformed into 'place' by transferring experiences from a previous living environment into a new living environment (Rowles and Watkins, 2003). Rowles (2008, p. 130) further suggests that people undergo a transition from being initially 'out of place' to eventually being 'in place'. This continuum reflects the processes experienced by older people who move into care homes, including the participants in the current study, who were in the process of turning their new living environments into 'places'.

By the time of their last study interviews, some participants had started to feel part of their care home communities. Most had completed the process of transferring their personal belongings, which had enabled them to personalize their rooms and to start developing a sense of 'home'. The importance of creating a sense of 'home' has also been found elsewhere (Falk *et al.*, 2012; Cooney, 2011; Lewinson *et al.*, 2012), with the ability to equip a personal space with belongings and furniture a significant part of this process (Falk *et al.*, 2012). For example, Cooney (2011) found that care home residents who were able to arrange their own rooms felt that they were at 'home'. A 'Theory of Finding a Home' was proposed by Cooney (2011), which described factors of importance for older people developing a sense of 'home' in a long-term care facility. Such factors included continuity, preserving personal identity, having a sense of

belonging and being active. These factors also appeared to influence the current study participants, although not all of them appeared to have been achieved by the time of the last study interviews. For example, none of the current study participants described feeling 'at home', suggesting that they were still undergoing a transition period.

Current study participants' delay in developing a new sense of 'home', may reflect their continued ownership of their previous houses or flats. It was to the latter that they professed themselves attached and considered 'home'. Most older people in Slovenia live out their lives in homes that they own and have built for themselves (Železnik, 2007). A study by Falk *et al.* (2012), indicated that some care home residents maintained attachments beyond their institutions by continuing to own their old homes. This choice may, however, prevent people's attachment to a new living environment. One participant, in a study by Granbom *et al.* (2014), considered a care home a place to eat and sleep, but not to live. This finding could reflect the experience of the current study participants, as they all kept their previous homes. Most also chose to visit their previous houses, flats or weekend cottages; describing these locations as places in which they felt 'at home'. One of the current study participants was even thinking of moving back to her previous home, at the time of her last interview, questioning whether that living environment best met her current needs.

4.5.7 The decision to relocate

All six of the current study participants had planned their own care home moves; requiring them to engage in a range of relocation-related activities before moving. All described the rationales for their decisions with pride; despite their realisation that their new care home settings had influenced their everyday lives. Older people's transition to living in a care home is influenced by the ways that they perceive their relocations (Lee, Simpson and Froggatt, 2013). Several of the current study participants emphasised that, although they had found it challenging to adjust to care home living the decision to move had been theirs alone. A systematic review by Brownie *et al.* (2014) indicated that older people's relocation experience is highly influenced by their perceived control over the decision to move. A further qualitative study by Brandburg *et al.* (2013) found that care home residents who were involved in decisions relating to their relocations experienced less problems adjusting to their new lives than those who were not.

Although the current study found that moving into a care home affected this group of older Slovenians' occupational engagement, these effects may have been even more profound if the participants had not, themselves, taken the decision to move. The Slovenian literature suggests that most older people would like to remain in their own homes (Železnik, 2007). The existing lack of non-institutional alternatives means that, like the current study's six participants, many decide to relocate for preventative reasons (Hvalič Touzery, 2007). A study by Löfqvist *et al.* (2013) found that their older participants had often decided to relocate to a care home in order to maintain or increase their

autonomy in their everyday lives, including their everyday occupations. This finding is reflected in the current study participant who said that his family had tried to dissuade him from moving because he had still been able to live independently. He had decided to move, however, in order to maintain his independence and to keep control over his everyday occupations, without burdening his family. Older people's desire to avoid 'being a burden' has also been found elsewhere (Stenner, McFarquhar and Bowling, 2010); autonomy contributing to the development of a sense of well-being and the process of adjustment to a new living environment such as a care home (Brownie *et al.*, 2014).

Environmental gerontology explores the relationship and congruence between older adults and their living environments (Granbom *et al.*, 2014). Several theories seek to illuminate older people's transition from one living environment to another (Perry, Andersen and Kaplan, 2014). For example, the Theoretical Model of Residential Normalcy (Golant, 2015) proposes that older people must feel both comfort with and mastery over their living environments if they are to achieve residential normalcy. For example, one of the current study participants decided to relocate to a care home following a fall. This man, who was visually impaired but had no other health problems, believed that this move would enable him to feel safe and keep his independence for as long as possible. His new living environment did not, however, offer him enough support to achieve a state of residential normalcy again. According to the Theoretical Model of Residential Normalcy (Golant, 2015) this participant already felt outside his residential comfort zone when still living at home. Although this model offers a logical explanation of older people's rationale for relocating into a care home,

residential normalcy may not always be achieved thereafter, which indicates a potential limitation of the model.

4.6 Conclusion

The six older Slovenian people who made the transition to a care home highlighted that keeping their previously meaningful occupations and routines helped them to maintain their personal identities. Although participants needed to adjust some of their everyday routines and occupational roles to fit in with their co-residents and new institutional environments, they prioritised those occupations that held most personal meaning and value. Participants described strong connections to their families, and to familiar environments, both of which influenced their occupational engagement throughout their care home transitions.

Existing evidence on older people's engagement in occupation, whilst making the transition into a care home is limited (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Cutchin *et al.*, 2010). None of the latter studies focused on older people's meaningful occupations and all were conducted in English-speaking parts of the world. The findings of the current study add to occupational science's body of knowledge by enhancing understanding of older people's occupational engagement throughout their transition into a care home. This research is vital in the Slovenian socio-cultural context, with no studies exploring this transition from an occupational perspective being found. Further longitudinal studies are needed to address the concerns of older people making the transition to care home living over a longer period and in varied cultural contexts.

Stage 2 of this research also highlighted that the care home environment did influence the individual participants' occupational engagement. This indicated the need for further research, exploring how shared culture of Slovenian care homes influences older people's engagement in occupations. Existing evidence on the topic of Slovenian older people in care homes is limited (Mali, 2008; Habjanič *et al.*, 2012), with no studies focusing particularly on the residents' engagement in occupation. Stage 3 of this research therefore aimed to explore older people's occupational engagement, as a culture-sharing group, in one of Slovenian care homes.

CHAPTER FIVE

Stage 3

Older people's engagement in occupation in one Slovenian care home

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Stage 3 of this research, which focused on exploring older people's engagement in occupation in one Slovenian care home and how the care home environment influenced their occupational engagement. In contrast to the previous two stages, which focused on individual Slovenian older people's experiences, this stage contributes the perspective of Slovenian older people as a group, sharing the same living environment. The chapter provides a critical discussion of the existing evidence on the topic, an overview of the research methodology and methods used, and a presentation of findings, discussed in relation to the existing literature.

5.2 Literature review – Stage 3

The current research, which focuses on Slovenian older people's engagement in occupation, consists of three stages. The first stage explored experiences of older Slovenians' occupational engagement, in particular their engagement in meaningful occupations. The second stage aimed to understand the ways in which transition into a care home influenced these occupations. The last part of this review focuses on the third and final stage, which sought insights into the

care home environment's potential influence on Slovenian care home residents' daily occupations. The following databases were searched to identify relevant research articles in English: CINAHL, MEDLINE, AMED and SocINDEX. The search terms used are shown in the following table (Table 10). These were combined using Boolean operators. An additional set of inclusion and exclusion criteria were also applied (Table 11) to increase the relevance of the articles identified. The above search generated a total of 1565 research articles, of which nine met the study inclusion criteria. Eight additional articles were identified by hand-searching relevant journals and accessing earlier articles' reference lists. The Slovenian literature was searched using COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services) and through personal communication. Although no studies exploring Slovenian care home residents' occupational engagement were located, the search did find two Slovenian studies investigating care home residents' lives from other perspectives. This resulted in 19 papers altogether (Table 12).

Table 10: Search terms (Stage 3)

Older people OR	AND	Care home OR	AND	Occupation* OR	NOT	Dementia
older adults OR elderly OR elders OR residents OR seniors		residential home OR residential care OR nursing home OR Long term care		activity OR participation OR engagement		

Table 11: Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-reviewed research articles • Articles exploring care home residents' occupational engagement • Published in English or Slovenian • Research articles published between 2001 and 2016 • Participants aged 65 years or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles including older people with a particular condition (e.g. dementia) • Articles published in other languages

Table 12: Literature search summary

Articles in English - identified through the database search (n = 1565)	Articles in English - identified from other sources, eligible for inclusion (n = 8)	Articles in Slovenian – identified from other sources, eligible for inclusion (n = 2)
Articles eligible for inclusion (n = 9)	(n = 8)	(n = 2)
Total number of articles included: 19		

All of the research articles that met the current study's inclusion criteria were critically appraised using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) qualitative research appraisal checklist (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2013). This approach enabled any gaps in the existing literature to be identified and the critique of the existing evidence in terms of its research process.

This final part of the literature review is presented in three parts, with the first two parts focusing on older care homes residents' occupational engagement and the last part considering more general care home life. The final part of the review includes the two Slovenian studies noted above.

5.2.1 Older people's occupational engagement in care homes

The third and final stage of this research explored older Slovenian care home residents' occupational engagement, including a consideration of the care home environment's potential influence on these occupations. Research shows that, although continuing to engage in previously valued, familiar occupations is important following care home admission, it is often constrained by the institutional care home environment (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Hearle *et al.*, 2005). A qualitative study by Gustavsson, Liedberg and Larsson Ranada (2015), conducted in a Swedish nursing home, explored 15 residents' and 6 staff members' descriptions of residents' daily activities. The findings revealed that the latter were either shared or solitary in nature. Shared activities were undertaken in the company of other residents and/or staff members, and solitary activities were undertaken alone. Residents reported that they enjoyed spending time with staff, although they had to sometimes adjust their activities to staff members' work routines. Obtaining the perspectives of both the residents and the staff potentially introduces an element of triangulation into this study, contributing to its quality. If staff members' perceptions of residents' occupational engagement differ from residents' views, however, this might constitute a study limitation. Although Gustavsson and colleagues' (2015) findings are context-specific, which may limit their transferability, they are of significant importance to the current research, which focuses on care home residents' daily occupations.

Exploring older people's time use has been acknowledged as important, in order to understand potential links between their activities and their health and well-being (Hocking, 2009). Ethical concerns have been raised that some older care home residents experience occupational deprivation and boredom due to a lack of opportunity to engage in occupations (O'Sullivan and Hocking, 2006). Two studies were identified that investigated the type and frequency of care home activities (Sackley *et al.*, 2006; Hallaj *et al.*, 2010). In the first, Sackley *et al.* (2006) used observations to record residents' positions, predetermined activities and social interactions every ten minutes, over a 16 hour period, in a British 18-bed residential home. Their recorded results, which were analysed descriptively (Walters and Freeman, 2010), indicated low levels of resident activity. Almost all of the observations made (97%) showed that residents had been sitting, with almost two thirds (61%) indicating no activity at all. It should be remembered, however, that the researchers' observations only took place every ten minutes over a 16-hour period; limiting the data gathering process and potentially influencing the study results. Moreover, residents' cognitive and mobility levels, either or both of which might have influenced their activity levels, were not assessed, as the study authors acknowledged. In a similar study, Hallaj *et al.* (2010) observed the type and frequency of 188 residents' daily activities in four Egyptian care homes. The researchers' observations were recorded using a list of predetermined activity types (physical, social and outside the home). Additional data were then collected using structured interviews. The results highlighted that, amongst social activities 'spending time with family and friends' happened most often. 'Walking' was the most commonly reported physical activity. Both data collection methods used predetermined answers, however; limiting participants' ability to report unlisted activities. The

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Statistics, 2011) was used to analyse the study data. Although this study received ethical approval, concerns arose about some of the recruitment processes used. For example, the researchers' decision to ask residents' friends to persuade them to participate in the study is ethically questionable. This approach, which influenced the data collection process, may have been due to a lack of rapport between the researchers and the participants. The study was also conducted in a specific socio-cultural environment, which may limit the transferability of its findings. Despite these limitations, this study indicates the need for further research into occupational engagement amongst older care home residents.

Interactions between individuals' occupations and environments are widely explored and discussed in the occupational science and occupational therapy literature (Kielhofner, 2008; Townsend and Polatajko, 2007). Despite this, Van't Leven and Jonsson (2002) argue that this literature primarily explores the ways in which environmental factors influence people's occupational performance, rather than the influence of institutional environments such as care homes. In their study of ten Dutch nursing home residents, participants noted that the institutional environment both supported and constrained their occupational performance. Whilst some participants enjoyed the 'doing' aspect of engaging in activities, others were happy to observe without being actively engaged. They valued having a sense of control over their daily activities and all described belonging to different groups within the care home setting. Although no cognitive decline was reported amongst residents, prior to the study, the findings showed that some had confused the past with the present; potentially influencing the study findings. All participants also had motor and sensory

limitations, and some had additional speech problems; any of which could have impacted upon the data collection process. Despite its potential limitations, this study explored care home environments' influence on residents' occupational engagement; of relevance to the current research.

In a further study, also focused on concerns about occupational performance, Crenshaw *et al.* (2001) used the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) (Law *et al.*, 2005), alongside observations and a documentation review to explore the experiences of 22 residents from four American assisted living facilities. The resulting data were synthesised for each resident and each synthesis was subjected to content analysis. The study findings highlighted that participants were unable to engage in some of their previously valued occupations due to ill-health and/or institutional constraints. Residents differed in their acceptance of their new living circumstances, with some being more positive than others. This study's research process had several limitations which might have influenced its findings. Whilst COPM may have offered a helpful structure for data gathering, it could also have limited further exploration of participants' experience. In addition, the data synthesis was conducted by one researcher, and the interviews were not recorded and transcribed, both of which could have influenced the data's analysis and interpretation. A further potential limitation is the researchers' failure to explain the contribution that the observational and documentary data made to the final outcome.

Atwal, Owen and Davies (2003) also used The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) (Law *et al.*, 2005) to study occupational satisfaction among seven older British nursing home residents. These

participants identified their most important activities, in the occupational performance areas of self-care, productivity and leisure. Qualitative analysis of the study interviews highlighted that participants perceived continued engagement in self-care and leisure activities as significant. Several participants perceived socialising as their most important performance area, with two individuals discussing environmental factors as a barrier to their engagement in social activities. Participants also emphasised the importance of having personal autonomy and making choices. This study's findings provide a valuable insight for the current research, which focuses on the care home environment's influence on older people's occupational engagement. As with the above study, Crenshaw and colleagues' (2001) work would have been strengthened by collecting the qualitative data via in-depth interviews, instead of using the more structured COPM. Such interviews would have enabled participants' experiences of occupational engagement to have been explored in greater depth (Patton, 2015). Issues were also identified with regard to participants' recruitment, by Crenshaw and colleagues (2001), which may have influenced their findings.

Eyers *et al.* (2012) explored everyday life, and particularly the role of organised activities, amongst 145 older residents in ten purposefully selected British care homes. The data arose from daily diary logs, containing questionnaires about everyday activities, kept by participants for two weeks. Participants who were unable to complete such diaries were visited daily, by one of the researchers, to record their intervening activities. Informal conversations were also held with participants to support the formal questionnaire data. Further data came from interviews conducted with the managers and activity organisers from all ten

care homes, as well as from observations carried out daily for two hours. A total of 250 hours of observational data resulted. The study findings indicated that everyday activities, in these care homes, were dominated by institutional routines and the prioritisation of activities of daily living (ADLs). This focus was especially evident in the mornings, when residents who needed staff to take them to organised leisure activities were unable to attend because staff members needed to complete other tasks. The researchers found minor differences in the choice of organised leisure activities offered by individual care homes; some of which residents perceived as inappropriate and childish. The researchers concluded that there was little evidence of person-centred practice and/or the consideration of individual resident's choices. Activity organisers were generally confident that they were providing a suitable range of activities, despite residents' discontent. Eyres and colleague's (2012) study has limitations, in terms of its data collection methods and a general lack of detail about the data analysis process used. Participants' ages also ranged from 60 to 100 years, which may have influenced the ways in which their daily activities were experienced. In addition, 105 of the 145 participants were women. Finally, all ten of the care homes studied were located in South-East England, which limits the transferability of the data, both nationally and internationally.

An ethnographic study, by Harnett (2010), also found that institutional routines loomed large in care home life. This study explored residents' everyday routines, and the meaning of these routines in one Swedish care home. The data were collected by observations, conducted over a five month period, together with written records of informal interviews held with care home residents and staff. The findings highlighted that routines were embedded in the

home's organisational culture. Residents sometimes tried to disrupt these routines, to experience a change, but the latter always had to be negotiated with staff as it disrupted their work. Although the studies by both Eysers *et al.* (2012) and Harnett (2010) focused on care home residents' everyday routines, such routines represent an important part of older people's occupational engagement, which is the focus of the current study.

5.2.2 Older people's meaningful occupations in care homes

Individuals' health and well-being are known to be enhanced by engaging in meaningful occupations (Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong, 2002; Hedvig Legarth, Ryan and Avlund, 2005; Bedding and Sadlo, 2008). Palacios-Ceña *et al.* (2016) used a phenomenological approach to explore 45 older Spanish nursing home residents' experiences of meaningful occupation. Their findings showed that residents experienced a lack of meaningful occupation; often avoiding the activities offered by the care home, perceiving them as too simplistic. They also reported that the home's institutional regulations at times prevented them from engaging in some activities. Although Palacios-Ceña and colleagues described their (2016) research processes clearly, their study does have some limitations. For example, the study data were collected on two occasions; including different residents and using different interview formats (unstructured and semi-structured formats). These differences could have influenced participants' opportunity to elaborate on the topics at hand. The study's sample size was also large, for a phenomenological study, which seeks in principle to explore respondents' experiences and meanings in detail (Finlay, 2011) rather than to reach data saturation (Bryman, 2012). Although this study

was conducted in a specific socio-cultural environment, which may limit the transferability of its findings, it offers a valuable insight into care home environments' potential influence on older people's meaningful occupations; echoing the aim of the current study.

In an earlier study, Palacios-Ceña *et al.* (2013) had explored one particular care home occupation, investigating residents' experiences of mealtimes. This activity was also explored phenomenologically, in the same socio-cultural context as the researchers' later study. The earlier study's data were also collected via unstructured and semi-structured interviews, with a total of 26 participants in two groups. Once again, this approach could be seen as a limitation, as researcher's interview methods potentially offered participants different opportunities to develop their answers. In addition, a theoretical sampling method was used, in order to recruit further study participants. This sampling method is not usually used in phenomenological studies, which seek to explore people's experiences, but is a feature of grounded theory research, where the sampling method contributes to the emerging theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Palacios-Ceña and colleagues' (2013) findings revealed that mealtimes represented a reference point for all of residents' other daily occupations; enabling them to socialise, despite being allocated to particular tables based on staff judgment. Residents accorded the opportunity to decide where to eat, and what to eat, significant importance; a central part of their personal identities.

Meal-related occupations were also explored in a qualitative study by Bundgaard (2005). This study used observations and interviews to gather data

from five residents of a Danish older people's 'living unit'. Such units, which were then a novel concept in Danish care homes, allow residents to be involved together actively with staff in meal-related occupations such as shopping, preparing and serving food and sharing meals. Only two residents were interviewed, with observational data only coming from the remaining participants due to ill-health. The study's findings indicated that meals provided participants with a sense of home and belonging to a community, which was sometimes experienced as belonging to a family. The researchers acknowledged that these feelings might be amplified by the fact that only 6-8 residents lived in each unit allowed them to get to know one another and to share their life stories. Participants valued their freedom to choose their meals; for example suggesting or deciding what to buy. They valued meal-related activities, with some seeing such activities as part of their identity. This study has a number of limitations. Firstly, participants' frailty meant that only two residents were interviewed. Some residents experienced dementia, although all of them had to be included in the study observations, as all of them participated in the meals. These findings may not be transferrable to other countries, but they are still relevant to the current research. For example, Slovenian care homes provide small kitchens which are sometimes used by residents for meal-related activities.

A sense of community was also reported by a group of eight older American nursing home residents involved in a group activity of making flower arrangements for local hospice patients. This phenomenological study, by Cipriani *et al.* (2010), collected its data from interviews and observations. The findings showed that residents felt connected through sharing the same activity,

as well as their life stories, thoughts and feelings. They also felt proud of undertaking an activity that was thoughtful and would help others. The fact that only one man took part in the group, and that three of the female participants previous volunteering experience, may limit the study, as gender and previous experience may influence the findings. In addition, residents who were unable to attend the group independently were not included.

Focusing particularly on participation in leisure occupations and social interactions, a study by Thomas *et al.* (2013) explored the experiences of six older residents of an Australian residential home. The research process was clearly described, in this study, with semi-structured interviews used to collect the study data and thematic analysis used to analyse the resulting transcripts. Although participants were generally satisfied with their social lives and leisure occupations, they found difficulties maintaining their previous relationships due to transport constraints. As in previous studies (Bundgaard, 2005; Palacios-Ceña *et al.*, 2013), Thomas and colleagues' (2013) participants found increased opportunities to socialise and make new friends, despite difficulties socialising with residents who had developed dementia. The participants reported that they felt neither socially isolated nor bored, with a wide range of activities available. The latter may have been due to the fact that the care home which hosted the study was privately owned. This study's findings offer a valuable insight into leisure and social occupations in care home settings, although their transferability may be limited by the study's private setting and specific cultural context.

5.2.3 Older people's everyday lives in care homes

Although none of the following studies focused on occupational engagement (Andersson, Pettersson and Sidenvall, 2007; Cook, Thompson and Reed, 2015), all of their participants reported its importance. The value of occupational engagement was especially emphasised in a hermeneutic phenomenological study undertaken by Cook, Thompson and Reed (2015). This study explored the experiences of eight older adults living in four British care homes. Participants were interviewed up to eight times, over a period of six months, to elicit their stories of life in their particular care home. Narrative analysis was used to analyse the resulting transcripts. Engaging in meaningful activities was one of the themes that came from the study findings. The residents reported their desire to undertake activities with personal meaning and purpose, rather than seeking solely to pass their time. In overall terms, the findings showed that residents wanted to feel at home in their new living environments, instead of feeling solely as the recipients of care. The researchers acknowledged that the diversity of participants' care homes might have limited their findings. Despite this, the study's findings indicate the need for further work to explore older people's engagement in meaningful occupations; as in the current study.

In similar fashion to the above, Andersson, Pettersson and Sidenvall (2007) explored older people's experiences of daily life in a Swedish care home. This included their involvement in the decision made to move into the care home. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 13 residents, 10 relatives and 11 other contact persons. Based on the preliminary study findings, residents were

categorised as either 'satisfied' or 'dissatisfied'. Most residents (n=9) reported overall satisfaction, compensating for a reported absence of organised group activities by identifying and engaging in occupations on their own. They expressed the need to communicate with one another; noting that sometimes there was no chance to do so. The fact that some participants had only lived in the care home for less than two months may have influenced their experiences, as they would still have been adjusting to their new living environments. The relatives and other contact persons interviewed by Andersson and colleagues (2007) generally perceived residents as satisfied with their lives, although not all residents agreed. Although this study was carried out in a specific socio-cultural context, potentially challenging its transferability, the findings show the need for further research into older people's time-use in care homes. Andersson and colleagues (2007) could also, with benefit, have explained their data analysis process in greater depth, as the methods used to develop the final data categories were unclear. Finally, the residents' involvement in the decision-making process about relocating received little attention; despite being stated as a primary study aim.

Institutions can impact residents negatively, with limited opportunities to engage in meaningful activities (Palacios-Cena *et al.*, 2016), where there is rigid adherence to institutional orders and/or routines (Eyers *et al.*, 2012; Harnett, 2010). The Slovenian literature on this topic is limited, with no published occupational therapy or occupational science studies identified. Papers were, however, found from nursing and social care perspectives that explore older Slovenian care home residents' lives (Mali, 2008; Habjanič *et al.*, 2012). In the first of these studies, Mali (2008) compared Slovenian care homes to the

sociological concept of a 'total institution'; defining the latter as 'a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from a wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life' (Goffman, 1961, p. 11). Although Mali's (2008) findings indicated some elements of a 'total institution', relating to the presence of care home rules and routines, she noted that the latter were also adapted, at times, to meet individual residents' needs. Mali noted, however, that care home residents' lives were separated from those in outside world and there was control over individual residents' lives, to enable a large group of people to live together. Mali's (2008) study also highlighted that staff members faced varied emotional challenges, in addition to their routine work. The initial study data were gathered from 35 resident interviews, questionnaires given to 26 relatives and a combination of interviews and questionnaires completed by 31 care home employees. Following this, the study questionnaires were developed and administered to 44 social workers from different care homes across Slovenia. This study has a number of potential limitations. The researcher was a social worker in the care home in which most of the study data were collected. Furthermore, only questionnaires for social workers were administered in other Slovenian care homes and none of the other data collection methods, which limits the generalisability of the results to all Slovenian care homes. Despite these concerns, this study provides a vital contribution to the body of knowledge about life and culture within Slovenian care homes.

The second study that made a valuable contribution to the Slovenian evidence base was a nursing study by Habjanič *et al.* (2012). This study explored potential deficiencies in the care delivered in four Slovenian care homes. Habjanič and colleagues conducted unstructured interviews with a total of 16

residents, 16 relatives and 16 nursing staff members in these homes. Content analysis techniques were then used to identify four themes from the interview transcripts: neglect, unprofessional communication, an uncomfortable physical environment and inadequate administration. Respondents noted that staff shortages left many residents dissatisfied with the quality of their care. The resident participants also complained about inappropriate or rude communication, which nursing respondents attributed to a lack of time. The inadequacy of the care homes' physical environment and administration were commented upon by residents' relatives. Habjanič and colleagues' (2012) research process was clearly described, detailed and explained, and their findings related well to their original study aims. It might have been further strengthened by exploring the full breadth of residents' experiences of care home life, thereby gaining a wider and deeper perspective, rather than focusing solely on perceived deficiencies. Although neither of the above Slovenian studies focused on care home residents' occupational engagement, both contribute to knowledge about life in Slovenian care homes and, as such, both are of significance for the current study.

Low levels of satisfaction with nursing home caring and living conditions were also reported in a Swedish study by Berglund (2007). The study data came from semi-structured interviews, conducted with residents (n=195) by one staff nurse. Residents' next-of-kin (n=526) and staff members (n=413) also completed questionnaires to elicit their levels of satisfaction with the homes' caring and living environments. Residents had a further opportunity to add additional comments. They perceived themselves significantly dissatisfied with the changes that they had experienced to their health, as well as with their

influence on their care, their rehabilitation and their engagement in meaningful activities. Both residents' next-of-kin and staff members agreed with the latter, expressing low levels of satisfaction with residents' opportunities to undertake meaningful activities. Residents' next-of-kin also reported low satisfaction levels with the resident-staff contacts. The use of questionnaires to explore the detail of individuals' perceptions is not the most appropriate data collection method; potentially limiting the study's findings. In addition, only four nursing homes participated, out of many in the region; further limiting the generalisability of the study results. Despite these considerations, the study has the potential to influence the ways in which nursing home care is planned and implemented.

Berglund's (2007) study indicates that the views of nursing home staff can influence the living and caring conditions that residents experience. Robertson and Fitzgerald's (2010) qualitative study explored this area further, using semi-structured interviews to investigate 21 staff members' views of the care environment in two British residential homes. The findings highlighted differences in the organisational cultures of the two homes. In the first home, residents were engaged in everyday activities in order to make them feel at home. The second home was seen to be more akin to a hotel, emphasising the following of protocols and the development of professional relationships. The main difference was that, in the first home, residents were supported to complete their everyday tasks for themselves whereas, in the second home, these tasks were done for them. The study indicated the importance of understanding the influence of organisational culture on care home residents' lives; recognising that this feature may have a significant influence on residents' occupational engagement.

In summary, the above studies highlight that living in a care home can lead to a wide range of experiences and perceptions, of significance to older people's everyday lives and occupational engagement. Care home environments vary, in different countries, with regard to their nature, socio-cultural influences, policy and legislation. This variation indicates the need for further studies in this research area, focused on specific cultural contexts. The third stage of this study explored older Slovenian care home residents' engagement in everyday activities and their care home environment's influence on these activities.

5.3 Methodology and methods – Stage 3

The third and final stage of the current research (Stage 3) investigated occupational engagement of older people living in one Slovenian care home, as a culture-sharing group. The researcher observed the ways in which these people engaged in a range of activities, to understand the care home environment's influence on their occupational engagement. The study's aim, to provide insights into residents' everyday lives and shared living environment, led to the choice of an ethnographic research approach (Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008; Creswell, 2013). As the current study's ontological and epistemological positions have already been discussed (see Chapter 2), the following paragraphs will give an overview of the Stage 3 research methodology and methods and detail the ways in which these methods were used.

5.3.1 Ethnography

Ethnography, as a research approach, has its origins in anthropology (Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008). It has been adopted in numerous fields to date (Knoblauch, 2005); including occupational therapy (Luborsky and Lysack, 2006). The approach's main focus is on exploring and understanding cultures (Creswell, 2013), which Roper and Shapira (2000, p. 1) described as 'the process of learning about people by learning from them'. Sharing the same ontological and epistemological position as phenomenology, ethnography believes in multiple realities that are constructed jointly by researchers and the people that they study (Whitehead, 2004). Participants' views of phenomena are seen to be socially constructed, from an ethnographic perspective, through their interactions with other people, according to the norms of their culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013). Ethnography therefore aims to learn about the world from participants' viewpoints (emic perspective), at the same time incorporating an objective or scientific view (etic perspective) (Whitehead, 2004; Higginbottom, Pillay and Boadu, 2013; Creswell, 2013). Although these two complementary viewpoints are both important in ethnographic research (Whitehead, 2004; Fetterman, 2009; Holloway and Todres, 2010; Creswell, 2013), some researchers focus only on the emic perspective; placing them closer to the phenomenological end of the ethnographic spectrum (Fetterman, 2009).

The current study employed the latter approach, aiming to explore and explain occupational engagement in one Slovenian care home from the perspectives of the older adults who shared this living environment and resulting culture. The

study therefore focused on the insiders' (emic) perspective (Holloway and Todres, 2010). As noted previously, phenomenology seeks to understand the essence of phenomena by exploring people's individual experiences (Finlay, 2011). In contrast, ethnography aims to gain insights into a particular culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013) by exploring what group members say and do in their particular context (Hammersley, 2006). The ethnographic approach can thus be linked to discussions around individuals' experiences of occupational engagement. Although individual's experiences of occupational engagement are unique and subjective (Hammell, 2009; Pierce, 2014), their occupations are also informed by their wider social and cultural groups (Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt, 2008). The current study's previous two stages focused on the individual older people's experiences of occupational engagement. Stage 3 explores occupational engagement from a different perspective looking at the issue from the viewpoint of a culture-sharing group of older people. One of ethnography's main assumptions is that any group of people who interact with each other for a period of time will develop a culture, resulting in shared beliefs and behavioural patterns (Patton, 2015). This premise applies equally to older adults living in shared living environments such as care homes.

It could be argued that the current research Stage 3 aim was specific, focusing on the residents' occupational engagement, rather than exploring the wider shared-culture of older care home residents. Wolcott (1990, p. 64) proposed the adoption of a so called 'micro-ethnography' approach, as opposed to the techniques used in larger anthropological studies, where researchers have traditionally spent long periods of time in participants' worlds. Micro-ethnography, also known as 'focused ethnography', focuses on one particular

aspect of a situation or topic, rather than seeking to portray an entire cultural system (Wolcott, 1990; Higginbottom, 2013). Using this approach enables researchers to spend relatively short periods of time in the field, on a full-time or part-time basis (Bryman, 2012). Although this type of ethnography has been critiqued for being superficial (Knoblauch, 2005), it offers an opportunity to explore distinct topics within a specific context (Cruz and Higginbottom, 2013). The current researcher's focus on the distinct topic of care home culture's influence on older adults' occupational engagement, rather than other aspects of care home life, led her to choose focused ethnography as the most appropriate method to address this aspect of the study's aims.

5.3.2 Research methods

The following paragraphs will discuss the research methods used in the current research final stage (Stage 3); detailing the stage's recruitment process, data collection and data analysis methods. The ways in which these methods were employed, to address the study's aims, will also be explored.

5.3.2.1 Sampling approach and recruitment process – Stage 3

The researcher chose to pursue the third and final stage of her study in one Slovenian care home. As noted previously, this home, which was located in an urban area with accommodation for 300-500 residents, will not be described in greater depth, for reasons of confidentiality. The researcher's collaboration with the selected care home, in Stage 2 of her research, informed her decision to purposefully approach this site again, as the data from both research stages

would then provide corroborating evidence (Creswell, 2013). In purposeful sampling, particular participants or sites are selected because they have the potential to address studies' research questions (Patton, 2015). In the current research, the social worker who had facilitated the researcher's access to the Stage 2 study participants, served as a 'gatekeeper' once again. Bryman (2012) acknowledged the challenges of gaining access to closed research settings, suggesting strategies which were also employed in the current research and will be described in more detail below.

The researcher sent the selected care home's manager an information letter about the study (Appendix Y), outlining the research aims, and the study's proposed methods and length. She later met the manager, to explain the study in more detail and to give the manager the opportunity to ask questions. The manager provided written consent for the care home's participation (Appendix Z). The residents and staff members were notified about the researcher's forthcoming role. Residents, visitors and staff were also able to inform themselves further about the study by reading posters with brief descriptions of the study in the main lounge area and in the common rooms on each floor. On the first day of the observation period, the researcher also explained the study's aims and data collection processes to the residents before dinner, in the dining area, and to the staff members in a team meeting. These sessions gave the residents and staff opportunities to ask any questions and to express any potential concerns. No concerns or objections were ever raised; freeing the researcher from having to explain her intention to record data only for those individuals who were content to be observed.

5.3.2.2 Data collection - Stage 3

Stage 3 of this research explored the above care home's residents' engagement in their everyday occupations and the ways in which this was influenced by the care home environment. The paradigm of constructivism suggests that reality can only be understood in the natural world; as this is the context in which phenomena happen (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). In order to understand phenomena from a culture-sharing group's perspective, the researcher must therefore spend time in the group's world. Given this, participant observation or fieldwork is the primary method of data collection used in ethnographic research (Whitehead, 2004). In line with this methodological orientation, the researcher chose observation as the most appropriate method of data collection for her study, which sought to understand older Slovenians' occupational engagement in a care home setting.

Observations

Observation as a data collection method is considered 'the mainstay of the ethnographic enterprise' (Werner and Schoepfle, 1987, p. 257); taking place in participants' natural worlds, referred to in the research literature as the 'field' (Gobo, 2008). The researcher spent two weeks in the above care home environment, observing residents, visitors and staff and writing field notes. In keeping with the study's research aims, she focused on the residents' occupations and the care home environment's influence on this. Two weeks are considered adequate when ethnographic observations focus on a specific topic

(Bryman, 2012); in this study the issue of occupational engagement in a care home.

In principle, the length and nature of any ethnographic observations undertaken are also determined by the sensitivity of the research topic (Patton, 2015), as prolonged researcher presence may be suspect in some settings (Bryman, 2012). In the current research, the fact that the six Stage 2 residents were amongst the residents participating in Stage 3, hastened the researcher's development of trust with the wider participant group. Although the topic under study could be seen as sensitive, the researcher's openness with the care home's manager and residents helped her to gain access to this potentially closed research setting.

The researcher mainly observed the home's residents, visitors and staff from unobtrusive locations in the main residents' lounge and other common rooms, including the main dining room, a number of smaller common/dining rooms on each floor and the home's arts and crafts room. The researcher also observed the care home's outdoor areas. In principle, observations did not take place on the floor which accommodated those residents with severe dementia, as agreed in the study's Ethics Committee approved exclusion criteria. In addition, the researcher did not enter individual resident's rooms unless she was specifically invited by the participant concerned to do so. The two week observation period enabled the researcher to get a clear picture of the residents' experience of their everyday occupational engagement, including their daily and weekly routines (Luff *et al.*, 2011). On each of the fourteen consecutive days that she was observing, the researcher spent 6-10 hours in the care home; taking care

to include different times of the day (morning, mid-day, afternoon, evening, and one night) as well as week days, weekends and one holiday weekend (the Easter weekend).

The data were collected by using overt observations, with the residents, visitors and staff having been notified in advance about the researcher's forthcoming presence and role. Despite such notification, there may have been times when some visitors may not have known the researcher's status (Bryman, 2012), especially if they had not read the posters displayed. If this situation occurred, it was never identified during the observation period. In principle, the researcher sought to play a discrete role, as issues of privacy and personal space are very important in naturalistic settings such as care homes (Luff *et al.*, 2011). The potential disadvantage of overt observation is that participants may act differently when they know that they are being observed. However, covert observations are ethically questionable. As such, they are usually conducted in public places and not in closed environments such as care home settings (Patton, 2015).

The researcher acted as a 'minimally participating observer' (Bryman, 2012); mostly observing and only occasionally participating in participants' activities. For example, when the researcher was observing residents taking part in arts and crafts group activities, they usually invited her to join in. In principle, researchers' involvement in a setting, during periods of observation, can vary from observation alone, to complete participation (Patton, 2015; Bryman, 2012). Participant observation is the most common method, where the researcher is completely immersed in the setting, taking part in participants' activities but

gathering data at the same time (Holloway and Todres, 2010). Researchers' level of participation can also change over time, evolving from being solely an observer to becoming a complete participant observer (Patton, 2015). With longer ethnographic studies, and complete participant observations, there is a danger that researchers may 'go native'; losing their sense of being researchers and immersing themselves completely in participants' worldviews (Bryman, 2012). Such an outcome was not possible in the current study as the researcher would have needed to live in the care home in order to become a complete participant observer.

The current study researcher's observations were mostly accompanied by informal conversations, which also formed an important part of the data gathering process. Patton (2015) acknowledges that informal conversations are a necessary part of the observation process, although it is important that participants remain aware of researchers' roles. The current study's care home residents were told in advance about the study's purpose. As a result, they sometimes approached the researcher, unbidden, to share their experiences of everyday care home life, or sometimes just to initiate conversation. When not interacting with the residents, the researcher tried to immerse herself in the care home's atmosphere as much as possible, spending time in different care home areas and writing field notes.

The researcher attempted to gain an insider's (emic) view of her research setting (Whitehead, 2004; Higginbottom, Pillay and Boadu, 2013); seeking to understand the care home residents' perspectives on their daily occupational engagement. In addition to observing, the researcher found helpful to

participate in some activities, alongside residents, as it enabled her to experience what it was like to be a part of the setting (Patton, 2015). For example, the researcher attended several residents' meetings, interacted with them at meal times and participated in some of their group activities. Acquiring an 'emic' perspective is considered significant in ethnographic research as 'insiders' attach varied meanings to their experiences and are familiar with the rules and routines of their culture-sharing group (Holloway and Todres, 2010). The ultimate opportunity to acquire an 'emic' perspective comes from work in which the participants act as co-researchers (Patton, 2015), but this approach was not taken in the current study.

Field notes

Ethnographic observations are usually accompanied by note-taking, in order to record what is witnessed or heard by researchers (Bryman, 2012). This approach was used in the current study, with the researcher attempting to write down everything that happened in the setting, as it was happening, with a particular focus on residents' occupational engagement. Observations may initially be unstructured, and become more focused as time goes by, when they begin to answer studies' research questions (Holloway and Todres, 2010).

The researcher recorded her observations in Slovenian, by hand. Although some researchers use a digital recorder, for this purpose, this approach may be obtrusive (Bryman, 2012). The researcher initially considered using a digital recorder, in the current study, but instead chose to use a notepad and pen, in the belief that this would be more discrete; an important consideration in

naturalistic settings such as care homes (Luff *et al.*, 2011). In taking her field notes, the researcher noted down both descriptive and reflective comments, as suggested by Creswell (2013). The date and the time, together with the length of each observation was also recorded; enabling the researcher to see how certain events or routines unfolded on a daily or weekly basis. The informal conversations held with residents and staff members were also summarised and recorded as field notes.

The researcher wrote her initial notes during her actual observations; adding further details at the end of each day (Bryman, 2012). The researcher was better able to maintain her focus on residents' occupational engagement, by attending to the nine observational elements proposed by Spradley (1980) (Table 13). For example, at the start of every observation, the researcher noted her location and the exact date and time. She then described the events that were happening; attending to Spradley's elements.

Table 13: Observational Elements (Spradley, 1980, p78)

Space: location of the research

Actor: the people who take part in the setting

Activity: the actions of people

Object: things located in the setting

Act: single actions of participants

Events: what is happening in the setting

Time: sequencing of activities and time frame

Goals: what people aim to do

Feelings: emotions that participants have

5.3.2.3 Data analysis – Stage 3

Stage 3 data collection process resulted in seventy-one A4 pages (approx. 13,400 words) of hand-written field notes, based on the researcher's 14-day observation period. Once again, the data collection and analysis processes were both conducted in Slovenian. The researcher translated three pages of her field notes, and the related aspects of the data analysis process, into English in order to check the latter with her academic supervisors (Appendix U). The technique of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013) was used to analyse the Stage 3 observational data, as discussed below.

Thematic Analysis

As noted above, the current researcher used Thematic Analysis to analyse her Stage 3 qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). This approach is in common usage, to analyse such data, despite concerns that it lacks the precision needed to differentiate it from other, similar, qualitative data analysis techniques (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013; Bryman, 2012). Varied approaches to thematic analysis have been suggested and employed (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003; Ryan and Bernard, 2003). The approach's continued popularity probably reflects its flexibility; which enables it to be used in different research contexts (Bryman 2012) to analyse almost any kind of data (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) defined thematic analysis as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data'; going on to propose a series of steps to guide researchers who wish to conduct it.

Stages 1 and 2, of the current study explored individual participants' experiences of occupational engagement and the meanings that they attributed to these experiences. The resulting data required a data analysis method that was informed by philosophical positions such as the phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). In contrast, the researcher's Stage 3 observational field notes sought to capture the perspectives of a group of people. Thematic analysis takes no particular philosophical stance, and is legitimately used to analyse many forms of data (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The researcher chose thematic analysis as an appropriate method to analyse her Stage 3 observational field notes in the current research.

Data analysis process

As mentioned previously, data analysis was conducted in Slovenian, following the guidelines developed for conducting Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2013). The latter consisted of seven steps. All codes, themes and sub-themes were later translated into English, enabling the researcher to check the analysis process with her academic supervisors and to then write up her findings (Appendix U, Appendix V). The first step of Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2013) thematic data analysis process involves data preparation, including transcription, but was unnecessary, in the current study, as the researcher's field notes were already in written form. The researcher therefore began her analysis by reading and re-reading her field notes; enabled her to re-familiarise herself with the content and to immerse herself in the data set. The researcher

began to record ideas emerging from the data at this point. Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) suggest that these ideas usually reflect the most obvious aspects of the data and/or come from researchers' previous understandings of their chosen topics. Given this, the current researcher's decision to record her personal reflections, during the data analysis process, was an important part of this process (Appendix U).

The next step in the data analysis involved the complete coding of the entire data set. The complete coding process is a process of identifying and labelling anything and everything in the data that address studies' research question (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The current study researcher identified everything that reflected her care home resident participants' occupational engagement. She completed this step of the coding process by hand, working with the hard-copy data; writing a code name down, on the observation field notes, beside each element of the associated text. In principle, such codes can be based on the semantic meanings of the data or they can focus on participants' language and concepts. The current study researcher used semantic coding, to analyse the Stage 3 data, as the latter consisted of field notes, that she had generated herself, rather than transcribing participants' words. Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest that data that do not relate to studies' research question can legitimately be excluded from the coding process. Despite this, the current study researcher chose to code her entire data set, as her observations and the resulting field notes focused exclusively on her study's research aims.

Once the coding was completed, the researcher generated a word-processed list of codes, indicating the line numbers where each of these codes appeared

in the field notes' text (Appendix V). Where two codes overlapped, a broader code title was developed (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Colour coding was used to identify broader patterns in the data; indicating similarities and overlaps between codes which resulted in candidate themes. Although, in principle, candidate themes are considered to indicate final study themes, the researcher went back to the original data and codes to ensure that the candidate themes addressed the relevant study research question. After reviewing the candidate themes, two final themes with sub-themes were devised and named (Table 14). The data analysis process was checked by the researcher's academic supervisors to ensure its quality and rigour.

5.4 Findings and Discussion – Stage 3

The third stage of this study was conducted in one Slovenian care home. It sought to enhance understanding of the older adult residents' occupational engagement and the ways in which the care home environment influenced this engagement. The researcher used an ethnographic approach to gain an insight into the shared culture of residents' everyday lives (Creswell, 2013). This final study stage seeks to complement and build upon the findings of the previous two study stages, which focused on individual Slovenians' experiences of occupational engagement and/or transition to care home living.

The researcher conducted her observations over a two-week period, resulting in handwritten field notes. Following Braun and Clarke's (2013) Thematic Analysis technique, two main themes and a number of sub-themes were developed

(Table 14). The findings of this part of the study are now compared and contrasted with existing research evidence (Burnard *et al.*, 2008) and are then discussed critically below. Combining the findings and discussion, in this way, enables the findings to be contextualised, in relation to the relevant literature; identify similarities and differences and further contributions to knowledge (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Examples from the researcher's field notes, referring to page numbers are included to further support this critical discussion.

Table 14: Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Sub-themes
The importance of occupation	Enjoyable occupations
	Social interactions between residents
	'Filling time' occupations
Maintaining and losing the sense of 'self' and 'home'	The role of routine
	The importance of autonomy
	Care homes' physical environments
	The role of staff
	Sense of Home

The findings of the final stage of the current research supported those of the first two stages, highlighting the importance of occupational engagement in older people's everyday lives. The current ethnographic study indicated that the care home residents engaged in a variety of occupations, some being enjoyable whereas others being 'filling time' occupations. Several factors were identified contributing to the residents' sense of self and home, including the role of routine, relationships with co-residents and staff members, as well as being able to make autonomous decisions about their everyday life. In addition, the care home physical environment was identified as important for creating a pleasant care home atmosphere.

5.4.1 The importance of occupation

The study observations were confined to the care home's communal areas. This approach had the advantage of giving a broad view of residents' occupational engagement; promoting an understanding of their everyday lives in the same living environment. Care home observations and informal conversations indicated that residents were constantly engaged in a range of activities that were embedded in their everyday lives. This finding concurs with the view of people as occupational beings, with occupation an important part of their identities (Christiansen, 1999; Kielhofner, 2008; Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt, 2008). The researcher observed that, alongside everyday occupations such as attending meals, chatting to co-residents or going out for a walk, the care home also organised a range of different daily and weekly group activities. Some residents regularly attended these activities, but informal conversations revealed that others preferred to organise their own time. A

qualitative study, based in Sweden (Gustavsson, Liedberg and Larsson Ranada, 2015) found that care home residents perceived 'having something to do' and 'being active' important aspects of their daily lives. The final part of the current study confirmed the constant presence of occupation, in residents' everyday lives. These activities differed, however, with residents clearly enjoying some occupations and engaging in others only to pass time. These different aspects of residents' occupational engagement are discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.4.1.1 Enjoyable occupations

People's experiences of occupational engagement, and the meanings that they attach to them, are unique (Hammell, 2004). The current research observations highlighted that some occupations proved much more enjoyable to some residents than others. For example, when the researcher observed a regular weekly tai-chi group, some residents appeared relaxed and immersed in the activity and others seemed distracted and even complained aloud that they were not enjoying it. Eysers *et al.* (2012) observed daily life in ten British care homes. Their findings indicated that the homes tried to satisfy the needs of the majority of their residents, but that this occurred at the expense of individual's preferences. If people actively engage in an occupation together, their engagement may be based on shared meanings (Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow, 2009). Although personal meanings are idiosyncratic (Hammell, 2004; Hasselkuss, 2011), shared meanings may be based on specific socio-cultural contexts. Most of the residents in the current study were Slovenian; sharing the same cultural and historical background. For example, the residents who were

choir members, prepared for the care home's celebrations of national holidays, traditional events and residents' birthdays. The researcher observed that attending choir practice and preparing for the various national celebrations were interconnected, for residents, with those involved clearly enjoying both occupations.

When I arrive to the room where the choir would have their regular practice, there are already three residents there, setting up the room. They are arranging the chairs and chatting about who is coming and who is not coming today. They tell me they have regular practice once a week, but at the moment they're practicing two times a week because they're getting ready for an important celebration of a Slovenian national holiday (Day of Uprising Against World War II Occupation)...therefore partisan songs will be part of their repertoire. (Researcher's Field Notes, p. 58-59)

Although being part of the choir, and attending regular choir practices, were meaningful to those involved, the national celebration was considered even more important because it was related to residents' shared past and to national historical events. A Slovenian study by Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat (2013) indicated that baking a traditional Slovenian walnut-roll fostered a sense of national identity and connection to the past in the three older women concerned. Although Čurič and colleagues' study was small, and their research process was poorly described, their findings do indicate the influence of the Slovenian cultural context on older people's meaningful occupations.

The care home explored in the current study offered residents a range of organised weekly group activities, including arts and crafts, physical exercise sessions, tai-chi and singing in a choir. These activities, which were attended by some residents on a regular basis, could be considered co-occupations, in that

they involved ‘shared physicality, shared emotionality and shared intentionality’ (Pickens and Pinzur-Barnekow, 2009, p. 151). In the current study, the researcher observed one weekly arts and crafts group in which residents were making Easter decorations. Not only did group members engage in a reciprocal motor activity (shared physicality), they also shared a sense of excitement (shared emotionality) and a common goal of preparing for Easter (shared intentionality). A group of American older adults in a care home, participating in group altruistic activities, expressed a sense of connectedness with each other when doing so (Cipriani *et al.*, 2010). Although the latter study was conducted in a different cultural context, a sense of connection among the residents engaging in group activities together, was also evident in the current study. Although not involving older adults, a Slovenian study by Piškur, Kinebanian and Jossephson (2002) showed that occupations fostering connections with and contributions to others are important in Slovenia.

It is notable that health issues sometimes prevented the care home residents, in the current research, from engaging in the occupations that they enjoyed; although they said that their health and well-being were enhanced by doing so. For example, during an informal conversation between the current researcher and a female care home resident, about the annual care home Christmas party, the resident explained how dancing influenced her perceived health and well-being.

A lady just told me she has her knee injured, but emphasised she doesn’t feel any pain when dancing. She expressed dancing being her most enjoyable occupation. (Researcher’s Field notes, p. 37).

The same connection was reported by participants in the second stage of the current research with, for example, one participant claiming that she felt healthier after she had ridden her bicycle. Other studies have also found that older adults experience a sense of well-being when they engage in enjoyable occupations; indicating a therapeutic potential (Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Reynolds, 2010; Liddle *et al.*, 2013). A randomized controlled trial, testing a preventative occupational therapy program by Clark *et al.* (1997, 2011) demonstrated several health-related improvements amongst older adults who were engaged in meaningful occupations.

Observations of the residents' interactions revealed that several residents enjoyed engaging in occupations outside the care home, such as walking to the city centre, meeting friends and visiting a theatre or a concert. These residents seemed proud of continuing to have lives that went beyond the care home environment; seeing such visits as special occasions. Informal conversations between the researchers and these residents, however, showed that they separated their care home lives from the outside world. For example, a resident who was often invited to social events linked to his previous work-life enjoyed telling stories to the other residents about these occasions, after he returned to the care home.

Resident X joins us, who just returned from the city centre. He proudly explains he attended an opening of a new Italian restaurant. The other residents are asking him questions and admiring his stories. The conversation is pleasant, full of anecdotes and banter. The lady at the bar joins us as well. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 38)

The identified difference in residents' perceptions of life within and outside their care home was also evident in another Slovenian study. Mali (2008) found that the participants also enjoyed maintaining contact with their previous ways of life and environments beyond their care home walls. Similarly, a group of Swedish older adults reported that maintaining their contacts outside their care homes fostered their connections with the past and enhanced their feelings of control over their lives (Falk *et al.*, 2012). Such views may be echoed in the current research. The previous research stages certainly showed the importance of continuing previously meaningful occupations and routines, after relocating into a care home, for participants' identities (Ikiugu, 2005; Križaj, Warren and Slade, 2016).

It was observed that some residents enjoyed being less active than others and spent their time engaged in quiet occupations, for example sitting outside the care home reading, looking out of the window and thinking. These more restful occupations can be considered restorative, helping people to restore and replenish their energies (Howel and Pierce, 2000). Older adults find relocating to live in a care home challenging (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008). Restorative occupations are seen as beneficial, in overcoming challenging life events, contributing to individuals' well-being (Hammell, 2009). The following excerpt illustrates the way in which one current study resident engaged in several quiet occupations at the same time.

Sitting outside the care home. I'm surrounded with residents sitting at the tables, chatting to each other – this is the time right before lunch starts. On my left hand side there is a lady sitting at the table alone. She has coffee in front of her and a book in her hands. Her head rests in her hand and she's napping.

The car nearby wakes her up and she looks towards me. She smiles, puts her glasses on and continues reading. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 9)

Although it was not possible to determine how this resident was experiencing this occupation, it was evident from her facial expression that she was quietly enjoying herself, despite the other residents chatting and walking around her table. These findings concur with work by Van't Leven and Jonsson (2002), which found that some care home residents did not miss engaging in occupations themselves but instead enjoyed being in an atmosphere where others were 'doing'. Wilcock (1998, 2006) suggested, that 'being' is an important aspect of occupation; referring to thinking and reflection as aspects of occupational engagement. People sometimes need time, in which they are not actively engaged, to enjoy simply 'existing' or 'being' (Donovan *et al.*, 2005). This may have been the case with some of the current study residents.

Participants in previous stages of this research study found purposefully engaging in health-promoting occupations of paramount importance; especially when making the transition to care home living (Križaj, Warren and Slade, 2016). These views were echoed by the researcher's observations in the current part of this research; with care home residents intentionally engaging in such health-promoting occupations as weekly group exercises, walking outdoors and eating healthily.

The lady at the table next to me is scraping something white (I think it's garlic) into her plate. I ask her if that's garlic...and she replies (smiling), that she eats garlic every day because it's a natural antibiotic. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 56)

The researcher observed several current research participants engaging in activities that promoted a healthy lifestyle. These activities were clearly valued and enjoyed by those taking part, generating frequent conversations about what else participants might do, in order to stay active and healthy for as long as possible. Minney and Ranzijn (2016) also found that care home residents purposefully engaged in organised activities that promoted their health and active ageing. In the current study, participants purposefully engaged in such occupations because they perceived good health enabling them to maintain their occupational engagement and stay active.

There were also occasions when the residents felt that their institutions' orders and regulations restricted their ability to engage in activities that they valued and enjoyed. For example, the researcher could see from the residents' facial expressions and comments that some of them were unhappy with their care home's regulations relating to such issues as pet ownership and the building's evening closing hours.

She [one of the residents] tells me that's she's going to the park where she is going to feed the pigeons and kittens from the local community. She also says they should organise a shelter for animals. She had a cat at home and it was very hard for her when she had to leave him behind, namely because pets are not allowed in the care home. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 66)

Older people who live in care homes are often unable to engage in personally meaningful occupations (O'Sullivan and Hocking, 2006). Existing research shows that residents' occupational choices are limited by their institutions' regulations (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008). For example, the residents in Spanish care homes reported not being allowed to own a pet (Palacios-Ceña *et*

al., 2016); as in the current study. There is evidence that such policies may be changing, however. Some newly-developed care models acknowledge the importance of deinstitutionalising care home environments by allowing residents to bring pets and/or plants with them (Byock *et al.*, 2009). The Eden Alternative® model (Thomas, 1996) is one such example; aiming to improve the quality of care home residents' lives by allowing pets and plants, in addition to promoting intergenerational collaboration between children and residents. Testing of this model in a 21-bedded care home in the USA indicated that the residents experienced lower levels of boredom and helplessness (Bergman-Evans, 2004), than elsewhere, but this care model may not be transferrable. For example, on average, Slovenian care homes accommodate 200 residents (Hvalič Touzery, 2004), making the implementation of such a model more challenging.

5.4.1.2 Social interactions between residents

Residents were seen to socialise with one another at different times of the day. They might for example, spend time together in the home's common rooms, converse whilst waiting for a meal in the lobbies, sit and talk outside the care home or stand and chat informally on other opportunistic occasions. Social contacts play a significant part in care home residents' quality of life (Bradshaw, Playford and Riazi, 2012; James, Blomberg and Kihlgren, 2014). When the researcher talked to the residents in the current study, they emphasised the particular value of conversation. In similar fashion, some of the Swedish care home residents interviewed by James, Blomberg and Kihlgren (2014) equated engaging in conversations with 'being human'. It is notable that several

residents in the current research study complained about the difficulty of finding like-minded others with whom to converse; reflecting residents' differing cognitive abilities.

Just before entering the care home I ran into two male residents and we started chatting. They knew I was here for research purposes and one of them immediately started explaining what his experience of living in a care home is. He especially emphasised he finds it difficult to find people to talk to. He mentioned particular problem with dementia increasing among the residents. Another lady joined us and contributed by stating that these two gentlemen are rare ones that she can talk to. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 4)

The researcher observed that socialising was an important part of the different group activities organised within the care home; watching as residents clearly enjoyed interacting with each other to share everyday experiences and stories from the past.

'When we were young we didn't have the time and now we do. We had to sew for our children at home and now you can get those things in the shop.'
(Researcher's Field notes, p. 22)

The older adult residents of one Australian care home (Thomas, O'Connell and Gaskin, 2013) also reported that they often attended their home's group activities for the socialising opportunities offered, rather than to enjoy the activity itself. Group work has certainly been found to foster a sense of belonging and connectedness with others (Means and Evans, 2012; Hammell, 2014). The current research findings echo those from elsewhere, with altruistic group activities in a group of American care home residents triggering reminiscences and an enhanced sense of community (Cipriani *et al.*, 2010). Although the

current research was conducted in a different socio-cultural context to the above studies, the findings support previous research evidence about the importance of social contacts for older people living in care homes.

In the current research, the researcher also observed as the care home residents shared meals. This activity was clearly an important socialising activity; with the same residents regularly choosing to share dinner tables and to chat to one another. These findings concur with those from a Swedish study by James, Blomberg and Kihlgren (2014), in which care home residents stated that mealtimes gave them a sense of connectedness and meaning in life. The current research similarly highlighted that residents organised their other activities according to their mealtimes. Observations of older people, living in small living units in Denmark (Bundgaard, 2005), also found that mealtimes served as a focus for residents' lives; contributing to a homely environment and a sense of community. It must be acknowledged, however, that only 6-8 older adults lived in these units; enabling them to be involved in the daily decisions made about what to buy and eat. Given these differences, Bundgaard's (2005) findings may not transfer to care homes with 200 residents; as occurs in Slovenia.

Informal conversations that the researcher held with some residents indicated that some had established genuine friendships, within their care home; constituting more than simple socialising. These residents said that they had helped each other through life's everyday challenges and had gone on to develop close and caring relationships. The excerpt below provides an example of one such friendship:

She [one of the residents] tells me she had a wonderful friend who passed away one year ago. They were very close because she was one of those she could trust and talk to. She says she misses her. When her friend was ill, she was taking care of her and the care home staff was pleased, because she helped them as well. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 64)

The above resident, who clearly missed her friend, confirmed the importance of having someone to talk to, in a care home environment. In contrast, an Australian study by Casey *et al.* (2016) indicated that care home residents' expectations and perceptions of friendship were different from the social opportunities available. Some of the participants in the latter study, however, had dementia; a potential barrier to developing friendships.

In the current study, residents sometimes disagreed about certain topics, were competitive with and/or critical of one another. Such topics included the care home's regulations and the relative merits of various residents as singers and/or craft workers. Developing a sense of community is always potentially problematic, as it seeks to dovetail individual's needs with the needs of the community as a whole (Jolanki and Vilkkö, 2015). The researcher observed that the residents in the current study were generally polite towards and supportive of each other; complimenting each other's work and/or appearance. They often used humour in their interactions, making funny comments and/or telling jokes, which appeared to make socialising more fun. They especially seemed to enjoy situations in which both female and male residents were present, as most of the care home residents were female.

A man joins us and the ladies start laughing and joking that it's about time that a man joined them. They tell me that the ratio in terms of gender is more on women's side. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 69)

Although socialising seemed to be of relatively less importance in Stage 2 of the current study, one participant started to socialise with a group of women at the time of his last interview. He emphasised the importance of having 'a good laugh', with those women; confirming the above observational findings. The Swedish care home residents studied by James, Blomberg and Kihlgren (2014) also developed their affinity by joking with each other on random occasions when they had coffee or listened to music together.

Although the meanings of residents' family relationships were difficult to access through observations in the current study, it was clear that residents held their families in special regard. For example, residents usually invited their families to join them in their own rooms; hosting their visits in private. In contrast, an Australian study by Thomas, O'Connell and Gaskin (2013) found that participants enjoyed having other care home residents around when they had family visits. Family plays a vital role for older people in Slovenia (Kuhar and Nastran Ule, 2002), as noted in the previous stages of the current study, especially after relocating to a care home (Kornhauser and Mali, 2013). Care home residents' ability to keep up their family contacts links them both to their previous home environments and to the outside world as a whole (Mali, 2008). In the current study, the researcher observed that residents enjoyed intergenerational interactions particularly; those times when their own and other residents' children and/or grandchildren were present. Indeed, Slovenian older people have traditionally been involved closely in their children's lives and their

grandchildren's upbringing, due to their physical proximity (Piškur, Kinebanian and Jossephson, 2002). Care home residents from other countries have also stated the importance of family visits, with Swedish residents saying that family visits were their greatest joy, giving meaning to their everyday lives (James, Blomberg and Kihlgren, 2014).

5.4.1.3 'Filling time' occupations

The researcher observed times when residents were not engaged in any apparent occupations; seemingly having nothing to do. This was especially evident for those residents who spent most of their time in their own part of the building, which they left only infrequently. Some residents also felt the absence of previous responsibilities, such as cleaning, ironing, preparing meals etc, which they saw as having been 'taken away'.

Sitting in one of the common dining rooms (on the ward). Two ladies are waiting for the dinner to be served. One of them explains she doesn't have anything to do. She would still like to be engaged in productive occupations, but the staff would usually say they can do it for her. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 34)

The residents of one Swedish care home expressed similar sentiments; noting that they had had to give up their previous occupations and therefore had 'nothing to do' (Gustavsson, Liedberg and Larsson Ranada, 2015). The importance of continuity, in residents' meaningful occupations, was shown in the previous stage of this research, with participants feeling distressed at the loss of their previous occupational roles (Križaj, Warren and Slade, 2016). People who are deprived of the opportunity to engage in meaningful occupations often experience boredom (Martin, Sadlo and Stew, 2012), with

Wilcock (2006, p. 171) suggesting, that 'boredom is the most common response to lack of occupation'. Thus, Spanish care homes residents who had too little to do, or too much monotonous activity, felt that their time was being stretched to infinity (Palacios-Ceña *et al.*, 2016). In contrast, the researcher observed few such cases in the current study. Indeed, some residents said that their days passed quickly, with activities constantly available in which they could participate if they wished.

The latter findings might have reflected the fact that the researcher carried out her observations in the Slovenian care home's communal areas, rather than in residents' rooms. The occupational science literature explores the concept of 'occupational alienation'; considering times when people lack meaning or purpose in their occupations (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004). Some of the current study residents may have experienced such alienation on occasion, especially if they engaged in occupations only in order to 'do something'. For example, one lady preferred to engage in any activity rather than be unoccupied.

Some of them read, others watch TV. The lady sitting opposite me told me she would usually listen to the radio, read or pray. She said that even just doing anything is good...just to have something to do. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 36)

The researcher's observations showed that some parts of the day and week were quieter than others. For example, the care home became very quiet after residents' evening meals. Most residents retired to their rooms at that point; the emanating sounds suggesting that they were watching the evening news. Those residents who enjoyed staying up late said that they found the evenings

difficult. This finding fits in with previous views of occupational engagement as an individual experience (Hammell, 2009; Pierce, 2014), with activities that please one person frustrating another (Weinblatt *et al.*, 2000). For example, two of the current study's male residents explained that their care home closed at 9.00 pm, at which point all activities ceased and all facilities, including the bar, shut. They especially missed the opportunity to sit outside the care home, in order to chat, during the long summer evenings. Care homes usually try to satisfy the preferences of most of their residents (Mali, 2008; Eysers *et al.*, 2012), however; an approach also found in the current study.

The researcher most often observed residents who were not engaged in any activities on those floors which housed people with decreased abilities. A study by Mali (2008) indicated that Slovenian care homes offered a range of activities for mobile residents, but older adults with decreased abilities had far fewer choices. Again, it should be noted that the current study researcher did not access residents' rooms unless invited. As such, she could not see how residents spent their time when they were alone or how those who kept largely to their rooms spent their days.

5.4.2 Maintaining and losing a sense of 'self' and 'home'

A number of factors were seen to facilitated and inhibited residents' continued sense of 'self' and 'home'.

5.4.2.1 The role of routine

The researcher's observations of and informal conversations with residents highlighted that they strived to maintain their individual routines; echoing findings from the previous stage of this research (Križaj, Warren and Slade, 2016). However, participants in Stage 2 of this research reported that their routines were disturbed by the routines of other residents with whom they were sharing facilities. In Stage 3 of the current study, the researcher's observations showed that the institution's schedule also affected residents' individual routines negatively, due to generalising residents' needs. For example, the care home's 9.00 pm closing hour disturbed those residents who would have preferred to sit outside, or at the bar, in the evenings; making them feel as if they were being treated as children. One male resident illustrated this by using humour; referring to his 'dummy and bed-time'; the consolations of a small child. From the institution's perspective, the home, including the bar, closed as the afternoon staff handed over to the night staff.

Observations conducted in one Swedish care home similarly revealed that residents had had to adjust their routines to staff members' working schedules (Harnett, 2010). Observations undertaken in ten British care homes also indicated that residents' participation in group activities often depended on staff

members running such activities alongside their other work commitments (Eyers *et al.*, 2012). It should be noted, however, that the Swedish care home studied by Harnett (2010) admitted only 14 residents and the capacity of the largest British care home studied by Eyers and colleagues (2012) was 82 residents. The above studies were conducted with much smaller samples than the average 200 residents of Slovenian care homes; making the transferability of their findings' challenging. Mali (2008) compared Slovenian care homes with Goffman's concept of a 'total institution'. The latter offers a critique of institutionalised environments, where large numbers of individuals are subject to strict controls and regulations in living a common life (Goffman, 1961). Although Mali's (2008) study indicated some elements of a 'total institution', in Slovenian care homes, the homes did accommodate some of their residents' individual needs. Such accommodation was also observed in the current study. For example, residents' meals were served in two sittings, because the dining room could not seat everyone together. Residents were able to choose which sitting suited them best.

Although the care home's institutional routines and orders limited some residents, others enjoyed having a degree of order imposed on their everyday lives, saying that it gave them a sense of consistency and security.

I asked them if they're planning on going home for Easter. They told me they are usually invited by their family, but they prefer staying here. One of the ladies stated: 'at home I don't even know when the lunch will be served and here I'm certain it's at 12.30.' They continued explaining that they enjoy having a routine and that it can sometimes be tiring when they go home to visit. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 62)

The residents were usually committed strongly to their routines; taking into account the allocated meal times. The researcher observed that there were no late arrivals. Most residents organised all of their other occupations around their mealtimes; with some waiting in the home's lobby whilst the dining room was made ready. A Swedish study, by Gustavsson, Liedberg and Larsson Ranada (2015), also found that organised daily routines were important to residents and that they organised all their other daily activities around their mealtimes. In similar fashion, the researcher's observations of interactions between the current study residents showed that they preferred to have their group activities organised at consistent times on particular days. Moreover, residents were sometimes upset if activities were cancelled, as this disrupted their plans for that day. Gamliel and Hazan (2006, p. 357) suggested that older people tend to follow 'spatio-temporal activity patterns' devotedly; as they seek to limit their activities to those that they can control. The current research findings indicate that although some residents perceived their care home's institutional routine as restrictive, it gave others a sense of predictability and security.

The residents developed their own individual routines, which they followed and enjoyed, to run alongside their institution's schedules. After two weeks of observations, the researcher could begin to see a pattern; with the same people engaging in the same occupations at particular times. For example, some residents drank coffee after lunch in the bar or collected the newspaper from the receptionist each day. In similar fashion, the residents in one Swedish care home differentiated between their individual and shared 'doings'; individual routines being based on their individual preferences and shared routines reflecting their home's rules and regulations (Gustavsson, Liedberg and

Larsson Ranada, 2015). As noted previously, the researcher's conversations with the current study residents showed that they often had to adjust their individual routines to fit in with staff members' working practices. It should be acknowledged, however, that the current study's data collection methods did not provide an insight into the individual routines of those residents with limited abilities, who spent most of their time in their own rooms.

The researcher's observations of the social interactions occurring between the current study's care home residents further revealed that they expected their visitors to arrive at particular times of the day and/or on particular days, and spent their time socialising in between these times in a routinized manner. For example, residents occupied the same chairs for their arts and crafts activities, and expected other people to know which was 'their' chair.

XXX [activity coordinator] tells me that usually the same residents would be attending art and crafts activities and they would always occupy the same sitting space. He also mentions that there would sometimes be a conflict if someone wants to occupy someone else's space. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 49)

This approach may have reflected the fact that routines are patterns of behaviour that create familiarity and represent an important part of people's identity (Clark, 2000; Hasselkus, 2011).

The current study residents did not only follow their institution's schedule in terms of its time and frequency, but also developed particular roles and habits with regards to particular events. For example, during care home celebrations and other singing events, one person was expected to sing a particular song that had been popular in residents' youth. Also, when the residents engaged in

group activities, they expected one female resident to have made their coffee first. These outcomes did not stem from the care home's staff members, but from residents themselves. These 'behavioural patterns' (Hasselkuss, 2011, p. 71) are occupations that create familiarity in people's daily lives and represent an important part of their identities (Clark, 2000; Hasselkuss, 2011). Previous stages of this research study indicate that older participants' routines did, indeed, become meaningful rituals and an important part of their identities. Although the observations conducted in Stage 3 of the current research did not offer opportunities to explore residents' occupational meanings, some of their observed routines and roles may have reflected significant parts of their personal identities; influencing the ways in which they both perceived themselves and were seen by others.

5.4.2.2 The importance of autonomy

Residents emphasised the importance of maintaining their freedom of choice, especially in terms of their decision-making abilities, even before they moved into a care home.

The residents often refer to their decision of moving into a care home. One of the residents particularly emphasised that you need to make this decision by yourself...when you are still well enough to make it. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 23)

Autonomy reflects the ability to make decisions about things that are personally important, including undertaking chosen activities in chosen ways (Council on the Ageing, 2009). Although participants' decision to relocate to a care home

was not the focus of the current study, all of the participants in the previous stage stated the importance of having made an autonomous decision to move; emphasising that it had been the right thing to do to avoid burdening their families. These findings concur with those of previous studies (Brownie *et al.*, 2014; Brandburg, 2013); which found that care home residents' sense of having made independent decisions to relocate were crucial for the success of their eventual adjustment to their new living environments.

It was evident that the current study residents valued their privacy and therefore preferred to have single rooms. Although most of the rooms in their particular care home were single, other rooms were double rooms. Some single and double rooms also had shared bathrooms.

They [the residents] told me different residents have different ways of spending their days, for example one would like to watch TV in the evenings, the other would like to read, one would like the window open, the other not etc. They emphasised these are really important things for the residents. One of them made a remark it was cruel having to share a room with someone else. (Researcher's Field notes, p52)

Having a single room gave residents autonomy; allowing them to undertake their usual daily routines, in their own time, according to their personal preferences. In contrast, the previous stage of the current research highlighted the distress that two participants felt at having to adjust their daily occupations to fit in with their co-residents' routines (Križaj, Warren and Slade, 2016). Current study residents clearly valued their own space, and the resulting possibility of privacy. These findings echo those of an earlier grounded theory study conducted by Cooney (2011). In the latter study, Irish care home

residents who had their own rooms felt a sense of 'ownership', but those living in open-plan wards experienced feelings of 'homelessness'.

The residents taking part in the current study considered their rooms as the only spaces, in their care home, that were truly 'theirs'. Informal conversations with the researcher revealed they were very selective about who was allowed to enter their rooms. Close family and friends were usually permitted to enter, as well as care home staff members if needed. Cook, Thompson and Reed (2015) similarly found that the care home resident participants sought to protect their personal spaces from unwanted visitors; with privacy an important part in maintaining their autonomy. In contrast, Mali (2008) found that care home staff often disturbed the privacy of less mobile residents by failing to knock on entering their rooms. Although this behaviour was not observed in the current study, this may be due to the fact that the researcher did not see the interactions that occurred between staff members and those residents who spent most of their time in their rooms.

Residents' ability to make small choices, with regards to their everyday occupations, was of paramount importance to them. For example, deciding whether or not to have breakfast, or acting against a doctor's advice, increased residents' sense of autonomy.

*A gentleman next to me told me he had a diet for his diabetes but he cancelled it because he can choose by himself what's healthy or not for him.
(Researcher's Field notes, p. 54)*

In similar fashion, an American study by Bangerter *et al.* (2016) highlighted that honouring the everyday preferences of nursing home residents can make them more satisfied with their care. A British study (Cook, Thompson and Reed, 2015, p. 12), exploring older people's stories of their lives in a care home found that they focused on so-called 'micro-decisions', seeking to influence aspects of their lives that were within their control, rather than issues relating to the care home's management. In observing the care home's dynamics in the current study, the researcher could see that residents' ability to make small everyday choices, such as whether to engage in group activities, when to collect a newspaper or whether to have breakfast, gave them a sense of personal autonomy.

The current study residents sometimes expressed frustrations about situations in which they felt that they were being overly supervised or otherwise treated like children. For example, one male resident explained that he was unhappy about aspects of the home's evening closure process. This related to the fact that the home closing hour required the residents who returned later to ring a bell to alert the staff to come and open the door. It is important to acknowledge, however, that individual choices are often subsumed in the desire to please the majority in an institutional environment (Eyers *et al.*, 2012). This is especially the case if a large number of people share the same building, as is the case in Slovenian care homes (Mali, 2008).

Residents shed further light on their experiences of autonomy in the course of their informal conversations with the researcher. These interactions revealed that they were not allowed to undertake some activities, in their rooms, for

safety reasons. For example, one female resident voiced frustration at not being able to iron her clothes in her room; an activity banned for all residents by the care home's regulations. Instead, residents were required either to iron their own clothes in an allotted space or to make use of the care home's generic ironing service. Similar frustrations were found by Palacios-Cena *et al.* (2016), in which Spanish care home residents also reported that they were disbarred from certain occupations for safety reasons. Individuals who cannot engage in valued occupations may experience occupational deprivation (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004). The occupational science literature maintains that occupational engagement influences people's health and well-being (Clark *et al.*, 1997; Wilcock and Hocking, 2015), with occupational deprivation contributing to distress and ill-health for older care home residents (Walker, Cox Curry and Hogstel, 2007).

The current study residents set great value on monthly ward meetings that were held with staff, in which they could express their opinions and suggest ways to improve care home life. They discussed their concerns and suggestions with staff members, in these meetings, and tried to find solutions that would suit most people. Similar findings were reported by Mali (2008), whose study highlighted that Slovenian care homes usually had a council of residents, which could contribute to improving care home living conditions. In contrast, a study based in the UK (Cook, Thompson and Reed, 2015) indicated that participants felt unable to express their opinions about their care home's everyday management. Knight *et al.* (2010) noted that including care home residents in decisions about their living environment enhanced their perceived well-being and quality of life.

5.4.2.3 Care homes physical environment

The care home in which the researcher conducted her observations could accommodate up to 500 residents; with both single and double rooms available. Residents with different levels of needs lived on different floors, including one floor which was occupied solely by people with dementia. The latter floor was not included in the researcher's observations. The home stands is sited near to a local city centre; enabling those residents who are sufficiently well and independent to spend some of their time in the community. Residents mentioned this proximity, as a positive factor, on several occasions. A nearby park facilitates time spent outdoors, as do the care home's immediate surroundings, where benches and tables are available. Physical environments are considered vital in enabling or preventing people's engagement in everyday occupations (Townsend and Polatajko, 2007, Kielhofner, 2008). Such environments also play an important role in developing residents' sense of 'home' in new living environments such as care homes (Bradshaw, Playford and Riazi, 2012). For example, it was important to the Swedish participants in a study by James, Blomberg and Kihlgren (2014) to be able to sit outside their care home; the surroundings enabling them to spend time with their family and friends. In similar fashion, residents taking part in the current study spent considerable time sitting in the care home's entrance lobby, where conveniently sited chairs and tables made it easy to interact with other residents and/or visitors.

Some residents also watched the television or read newspapers there, although the lobby was also seen as noisy. The residents also had access to a bar where they could order hot or cold drinks; an occupation that they perceived as part of their daily routines as, for example, in having coffee after lunch. Cooney's (2011) study exploring older people's perceptions of 'home' in seven Irish care homes highlighted the importance of the homes' communal spaces, with residents reporting that they had insufficient space to sit and chat with their co-residents, family or friends. In contrast, the researcher's current study observations showed that the care home's physical environment offered various opportunities for socialising; with chairs and tables in the care home's entrance lobby, small communal spaces on each floor and benches outside in the gardens.

In the current study, organised activities were held in communal rooms on separate floors. Although these spaces seemed appropriate for many activities, they appeared less suited to those that needed a quiet space. For example, the researcher observed that one weekly tai-chi session was disturbed because the environment was too busy to support meditative activities.

A female resident next to me would really like to relax and it can be seen she's enjoying the activity. There are voices coming from the corridor and noises from trolleys...a sound of music on the radio can be heard from the distance. A physiotherapist passes by with the resident, teaching them how to use a walker. Telephone ringing from the distance...the lady on my right hand side leaves the room. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 9).

Similar outcomes have been found elsewhere. For example, a Swedish study by Van't Leven and Jonsson (2002), found that care home residents sought out

quiet spaces in which to engage in individual leisure activities. In addition, an exploration of end-of-life care in two care homes in USA (Kayser-Jones *et al.*, 2003) indicated that the facilities were noisy, often disturbing the residents and their families. It is possible that terminally ill patients, and their family members, might tolerate noisy environments less well than other people, however.

The researcher observed that some of the residents treated their rooms as their homes; enjoying arranging them according to their personal preferences. Residents were able to bring a piece of furniture or other meaningful objects into the care home with them, making a degree of personalisation possible to some extent, but most of the furniture was arranged consistently, across the care home. Some residents told the researcher that their rooms were too small to hold all of their possessions. A systematic review of care home life by Bradshaw, Playford and Riazi (2012) found that sufficient storage space for residents' possessions contributed to a 'homelike' environment. The older people who took part in the current study seemed generally satisfied with their care home's physical environment. A study by Habjanič *et al.* (2012), investigating potential deficiencies in care in Slovenian care homes, found that relatives perceived the home's physical environments as unfriendly and uncomfortable, but residents did not raise such issues. The authors concluded that this outcome may be cultural, as several of this study's participants had experienced hard working and living conditions in the past (Hadjanič *et al.*, 2012). The physical environments of Slovenian care homes may also differ.

5.4.2.4 The role of staff

The researcher observed that staff members' roles were of paramount importance to residents' everyday lives, in the current study. For example, staff members played a vital part in many residents' daily routines, especially for those who needed help with self-care. Informal conversations also revealed that staff members were residents' first points of contact; providing a sense of security. Jonson and Bibbo (2014) also found that contact with care home staff members gave residents a sense of security, whilst simultaneously restricting some of their daily routines. Although the latter study included residents who needed staff members to help them with self-care, the researcher was unable to see such interactions in the current study.

It was also observed that the current study residents valued their autonomy, but also developed trusting relationships with, and sometimes particular attachments to, individual staff members. Cooney (2011) found the continuity of staff members' service important, with participants highlighting that contact with the same staff members enhanced the quality of the relationships built.

The current study researcher also observed that staff members played an important role in maintaining and facilitating social contacts between the care home's residents.

The activity coordinator goes for example Monday afternoon to the ward's common room and has coffee with them. He says he does that so that the residents get to know each other and maintain contacts. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 4)

Informal conversations with the residents revealed that they would not have met if the meeting has not been facilitated by the member of staff. Staff members' physical and emotional availability also contributed to residents' development of a sense of 'home' in the care home environment (Cooney, 2011). In similar fashion, the residents in a study by Bergland and Kirkevold (2007) reported that staff members played a vital role in encouraging meaningful conversations, thereby helping them to establish new social contacts.

The researcher's observations indicated that the residents enjoyed interacting with staff members; especially where humour was involved. They enjoyed telling jokes and sharing anecdotes from their lives; knowing that staff members would find them amusing. Staff members were generally willing to reciprocate, making for pleasant social interactions.

Dinner lady goes around with a trolley, serving food. She uses different humorous remarks when chatting with them and that seems to suit the residents. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 53)

James, Blomberg and Kihlgren (2014) also reported the importance of humour in staff-resident interactions; with residents saying that they felt 'appreciated' in these interactions. In contrast, the American nursing home residents who took part in a study by Roberts and Bowers (2015) complained that staff members did not reciprocate their efforts to create a positive and friendly atmosphere. Such concerns were not evident in the current study, although interactions that occurred in residents' rooms remained unobserved.

5.4.2.5 Sense of home

Some current study residents had lived in the same care home for many years and clearly perceived it as 'home'. In informal conversations, such residents would refer to their rooms as their 'homes'; saying that they were 'going home' when they returned to their rooms. Developing a sense of 'home' is of significant importance when relocating into a new living environment and the congruence between older adults and their living environments has been acknowledged in the literature (Granbom *et al.*, 2014; Golant, 2015). Individuals' occupational engagement has been found to be important both in developing a sense of 'home' and in mediating the relationship between people and their personally significant places (Cutchin, 2004; Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006). A study by Heatwole Shank and Cutchin (2010) indicated that familiar places were an important source of meaning in occupation for older women; their meaningful occupations being affected after they had relocated into a care home. The researcher's informal conversations with the current study residents confirmed this link; with residents emphasising the importance of keeping the same room, even if their abilities later decreased. Such findings indicate that a sense of 'home', in new living environments, is vitally important to older people's well-being (Granbom *et al.*, 2014).

In contrast to the above, other residents in the current study were still adjusting to their new living environments and needed more time to develop a sense of 'home'. The care home aimed to facilitate residents' adjustment by enabling them to bring personally meaningful belongings with them, when they relocated, but this approach did not always help.

The occupational therapist told me an example of a lady whose room has been completely redecorated so that she could feel more 'at home'. But she still wasn't able to get the sense of home. Occupational therapist commented that the care home environment takes the person's soul. (Researcher's Field notes, p. 3)

Above is only one story, however, shared by one member of staff. Research from elsewhere is equivocal. Cooney (2011) found that retaining some personal belongings and furniture were important for care home residents' sense of 'home'. However, a Slovenian study by Mali (2008) indicated that care home residents' ability to keep some of their personal possessions reduced their sense of separation from their home environments: a potential obstacle to developing a sense of 'home'.

5.5 Conclusion

The third stage of this research study enhances understanding of older people's occupational engagement and everyday life in one Slovenian care home. The findings indicate that occupation is embedded in residents' everyday lives; adding to the findings from the previous research stages which show occupational engagement as an important part of participants' identities. The researcher saw a range of opportunities on offer to residents, to enable them to engage in enjoyable occupations; although observations were only carried out in the home's communal areas. As a result, these study findings do not provide an insight into the everyday lives of those residents who spent their time elsewhere in the building. For example, the observations and informal conversations that the researcher carried out on particular care home floors

indicated that some less mobile residents felt bored, because they did not have any occupational opportunities.

The importance of individual residents' everyday routines was acknowledged, although these were sometimes sacrificed in order to meet the needs of the majority of residents. Residents found their experiences of personal autonomy particularly significant, as a result, valuing their ability to make small choices about their everyday lives. Several factors contributed to the development of residents' sense of 'home', including developing good relationships with staff members and the care home's physical environment. The informal conversations held also offered only some insight into individuals' experiences. Despite these limitations, this study adds to current knowledge regarding older people's occupational engagement in care homes; being the first research study from an occupational perspective to be conducted with older care home residents in Slovenia.

Reflexive commentary

Before I started doing observations, I thought I will not be able to reach the participants' perspective – which was one of my concerns before I started this stage of my research. However, I was really surprised how I managed to immerse into the participants' world. Looking back, I think that is probably because when you are the observer, you have the opportunity to immerse yourself in the participants' context really intensely for a period of time – you don't listen to their stories but in a way you live them. I felt like being in a different world, going to the care home everyday, writing field notes and thinking about the residents' everyday life there. Everything else was a distraction for me

during those two weeks and I loved coming in, spending time in the care home surroundings and watching the world around me. I started understand the concept of 'going native', which sometimes happens, when the researcher identifies with the participants' world too much. Although that was not the case in my research since I was not a complete participant observer, I could see that it is possible to happen. I have to say, I really enjoyed this data collection method and I would love to use it again in my future research engagements.

5.6 Ethical considerations for all three stages

This research was conducted in three separate stages. The researcher used individual participant interviews to collect the data in Stages 1 and 2 of the research and observations in Stage 3. The participants, in all three stages, were Slovenian older adults. In order to proceed with the research process, the researcher required ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences of Plymouth University as well as the Slovenian National Medical Ethics Committee (Appendix X). The researcher initially submitted ethics committee applications, for study Stages 1 and 2, with her research proposal. Ethics approval was received shortly afterwards by the Slovenian National Medical Ethics Committee. The Plymouth University Ethics Committee required the researcher to address two points relating to the Stage 1 recruitment process before they, too, approved the research. Ethics application for Stage 3 was submitted two years after the initial ethics committee application was made. Approval was received promptly from both committees. Ethical considerations will now be discussed for all three

stages with regard to the following ethical principles: Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity, Voluntary Participation and Protection from Harm.

5.6.1 Informed consent

If potential participants are able to consider what is being asked of them, in taking part in research studies then, in principle, they should decide for themselves whether or not to take part (Long and Jonson, 2007). In the current research, the researcher gave each potential Stage 1 and Stage 2 participant advance information about the research in the form of an information letter. This letter described the study, outlining its purpose and explaining in detail its proposed data collection processes and the ways in which any future findings might be used. If individuals decided to participate, having read the letter, they were asked to sign a consent form. Participants signed these forms at the start of all of the research interviews, including those conducted in the longitudinal phase of Stage 2. Stage 2 participants each signed three consent forms, as a result. The researcher always provided two copies of each consent form. These were signed by both the participant and the researcher, on each occasion, with both parties then keeping a copy. The consent forms confirmed the voluntary nature of participants' participation, assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity and reiterated their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Contact details were also given for the researcher and her academic supervisor, to enable participants to contact either or both parties at the interviews' end. The researcher translated the information letter and consent

form into Slovenian language, so that participants would be able to understand and interpret them correctly.

Research that involves older people carries an extra burden of care, due to concerns that age-related cognitive changes might affect potential participants' ability to give their fully informed consent (Birkland and Kaarst-Brown, 2010). This concern was addressed by making cognitive decline one of the current research explicit exclusion criteria. In Stage 1, all participants were living independently at home. In Stage 2, where participants were at the point of relocating into a care home, the home's social worker served as a 'gatekeeper' to assure participants' cognitive competence.

Stage 3 of this research involved the researcher making discrete participant observations in the same Slovenian care home in which the Stage 2 participants were recruited. The social worker noted above forwarded the researcher's study information letter to the care home manager. This letter explained the study aim and proposed data collection process, enabling the care home manager to evaluate and to decide whether the care home was an appropriate research site.

Care home residents are a vulnerable group, in principle, and special care must be taken, to protect their interests, when obtaining their informed consent (Social Research Association, 2003). In ethnographic research, it would be challenging and disruptive to obtain informed consent from everyone who is likely to be observed by, or to otherwise come into contact with the researcher (Bryman, 2012). As a result, the Stage 3 consent form was signed by the care

home manager on residents' behalf. This consent form covered the same areas as the forms previously signed by individual study participants in Stages 1 and 2, namely: voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time. Bryman (2012) notes that ethnographers commonly access social settings via top managers; emphasising that covert observations may be ethically questionable. In the current study, all of the observations conducted were overt, with the care home's residents and staff being informed in advance about the study's purpose and data collection processes. As noted previously, the researcher did not observe on the care home floor which accommodated residents with dementia; in keeping with the study's ethically approved exclusion criteria.

5.6.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Issues of participant confidentiality, anonymity and privacy are closely linked (Bryman, 2012). In principle, researchers should prevent their data or findings from being released or published in any way that discloses studies' research locations and/or participants' identities (Social Research Association, 2003). While researchers are able to ensure participants' anonymity, they cannot offer confidentiality, as participants' verbatim quotes will be seen by others (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). In the current research, pseudonyms were used on all of the researcher's field notes and transcripts, as well as when writing up the results, to ensure participants' anonymity. She also ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the care home by giving minimal information about its characteristics, including its exact size and geographical location, in the study findings.

The researcher will also take care to maintain the anonymity of both the individual research participants and the care home site when she disseminates her findings via conference presentations or research publications, by acting as described above. All of the current research data are being managed according to the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998). The researcher has participants' transcripts and her observational field notes in a locked drawer and will destroy them, after ten years, in line with Plymouth University policy. The hard copies of the study's consent forms are also stored in a locked drawer and all electronic data are kept on a password-protected computer.

The researcher cannot provide the above guarantees, or be held responsible, if individuals freely reveal their participation in the study (Social Research Association, 2003). This issue must be considered, in the current study, as several participants expressed their excitement about sharing their stories. The researcher also conducted her observations in one care home for two weeks, with residents, visitors and staff members being aware of the study's aims and data collection processes. It is impossible to know whether any of these individuals has ever revealed the care home's participation in this research.

5.6.3 Voluntary participation

In principle, research participants must be made fully aware of the fact that their study participation is completely voluntary and that they can withdraw their participation at any point without penalty (Birkland and Kaarst-Brown, 2010). In the current study, the voluntary nature of individuals' participation was

highlighted in the information letters and consent forms used in all three of the research stages. All of the individuals who took part in Stages 1 and 2 expressed their personal understanding and consented to participate voluntarily, with the care home manager giving her consent in Stage 3, on behalf of that institution. Older care home residents may be seen to have limited freedom and decision-making ability (Birkland and Kaarst-Brown, 2010). The researcher addressed this issue by ensuring that the care home's residents and staff were informed about the study in advance; displaying descriptive posters around the building and reiterating the research aims and data collection processes to both residents and staff, on the first day of her observations, in person.

In principle, all of the research individual participants, and the care home manager on the institution's behalf, were able to change their minds about taking part in the current study. The researcher explained participants' right to withdraw at any time without penalty, in person, and reiterated it on the study consent forms. Individual Stage 1 and 2 participants were advised that, if they chose to withdraw, the researcher would return their interview transcripts and destroy both their audio-recordings and any related elements from her data analysis. Data from any participants who changed their minds would also have been excluded from the study findings. Although the Stage 3 residents did not give their individual consent to participate, they could have objected to being observed. If they had done so, the researcher would not have recorded any field notes relating to those participants. The researcher would also have destroyed her observational field notes if the care home manager had decided to withdraw the institution from the study.

5.6.4 Protection from harm

All researchers must evaluate the potential for harming their research participants (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The topic of the current research could have been experienced as sensitive, by the older adults taking part, making it important to set up strategies to address any resulting distress (Flick, 2014). Participating in phenomenological research can also be an emotionally intense experience for participants in general (Finlay, 2011). This issue was of particular importance in Stage 2 of the current study, when participants were in the process of leaving their homes to move into a care home. The researcher arranged for the care home's social worker, who acted as the study's 'gatekeeper', to support any participants who became distressed, although such support did not, in the end, prove necessary. The researcher also debriefed participants after each individual interview conducted in Stages 1 and 2 of the study, enabling participants to explore any potential distress or concerns about their data. In Stage 3, the care home's social worker was once again available to debrief any care home residents or staff who became distressed by the study's observation process. This support was also not needed.

The researcher had no intention to deceive the current study participants in any way at any point; taking a stance of explicit openness and honesty. In Stages 1 and 2, these ends were met by explaining the aims and nature of the research to potential participants in advance in writing. In addition, the current research 'gatekeepers' (ie. the care home social worker and manager), also explained the research to potential participants in person. The researcher also offered to

answer any questions for potential participants, to help them to decide whether or not to take part. In Stage 3, an information letter, detailing the aims and nature of the study and offering an opportunity to consider participation, was sent to the care home manager. This resulted in the researcher being invited to meet the manager, to explain the study's aims and data collection processes in more depth. The previously-noted strategies that the researcher used to advise care home's residents, visitors and staff about the study also demonstrate her commitment to openness and honesty towards potential study participants.

Although neither poor practice nor abuse was witnessed in the current study, the ethical and logistical aspects of bringing such behaviours to light ('whistle-blowing') challenge ethnographic researchers (Bryman, 2012). If the current researcher had witnessed any such behaviours, she would have reported them to the care home manager, to protect residents' interests. The researcher is not aware of any 'whistle-blowing' policy in the care home studied, but the requirement to report poor practice is a measure of quality assurance in UK care homes (Care Quality Commission, 2016).

5.7 Ensuring trustworthiness and the quality of the research process for all three stages

Qualitative research has often been criticised as subjective and unscientific, with the need to assure the quality and trustworthiness of their data a major challenge for qualitative researchers (Finlay, 2006). In the following paragraphs, the researcher will discuss the methods that were used, throughout the current

research, to enhance the findings' credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman, 2012).

5.7.1 Presentation of findings

To ensure qualitative research findings' credibility, believability and acceptability, studies must be conducted according to good research practice principles (Bryman, 2012). Smith (2010) suggests that researchers' use of verbatim quotes, to support their findings, will show the convergence and divergence of participants' experiences. He recommends that, for IPA studies with between four and eight participants, researchers should aim to present extracts from half of the interviews conducted. If the samples are larger, then extracts from three to four participants per theme should be adequate to support researchers' discussions. The current study researcher followed the latter guidance, presenting participants' verbatim quotes from each theme to illustrate the convergence and divergence of participants' experiences; thereby enabling readers to see the breadth and depth of each theme.

The researcher used the same method in writing up the Stage 3 findings: presenting excerpts from her field notes to support her discussion of these findings. As noted previously, the researcher had used Spradley's observational elements (Spradley, 1980) to organise her Stage 3 observations; enabling her to illustrate the diversity of the research setting well in writing up her findings. However, the amount of descriptive detail given was sometimes limited, in order to ensure the research setting's confidentiality. For example, the researcher has

chosen to give only limited information about the care home's precise physical features, capacity and geographical location.

In presenting the research findings from Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) studies, each verbatim quote is followed by an interpretative discussion, rather than a simple description. This approach is considered of significant importance in assuring the quality of IPA research. Such interpretation also demonstrates the researcher's engagement in 'double hermeneutic'; showing her attempts to make sense of participants making sense of their experiences (Smith, 2004; Smith, Flowers and Larking, 2009). To ensure the idiographic aspect of IPA, the current study researcher first presented individual participants' experiences, before presenting the findings from across the entire participant group. This approach enables readers to see any similarities and differences between participants' experiences; considered a hallmark of high-quality IPA research (Smith, 2010).

In terms of the findings' transferability, qualitative research is orientated towards the contextual uniqueness and depth of studies' findings, with regards to the phenomena of interest (Bryman, 2012). In the current research, the researcher presented as much information as possible about participants' contexts, with regard to their demographic characteristics and personal backgrounds, although this information was sometimes limited in order to preserve their confidentiality or anonymity. This approach leaves readers in a position to determine the current study findings' transferability to other individuals or groups of older adults.

5.7.2 Language

Van Nes *et al.* (2010) recommend staying in an original language for as long as possible, during the research process, in cross-language qualitative studies. This approach reduces the potential loss of meaning, during this process, and enhances the validity of cross-language qualitative studies' findings. This strategy was accordingly also used in the current research. All Stage 1 and 2 interviews were conducted and analysed in the Slovenian language. Two transcripts from Stage 1 and three transcripts from Stage 2, together with the entirety of the data analysis process, including the development of the initial commentary, emergent themes, superordinate themes and master themes, were translated into English. This approach enabled the researcher's academic supervisors to check the quality of the study's data analysis process, as suggested by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

For all of the remaining study interviews, the researcher translated all of the study themes, at all levels of her data analysis (ie. the emergent, super-ordinate, master and overarching themes) into English. The researcher sought to ensure the quality, accuracy and trustworthiness of the translation process in a number of ways. Firstly, she arranged for back-translations of the developing themes to be completed by an independent Slovenian native speaker (Appendix W). The back-translation process involved translating all of the super-ordinate, master and overarching themes into original (Slovenian) language. Following this process, the researcher debriefed the independent translator, before going on to discuss the study themes in more depth and to check that the developing theme titles accurately reflected the themes' meanings. Ten pages of transcripts

were also coded independently by a second bilingual Slovenian qualitative researcher (Appendix W). This process was followed by a debrief, via Skype, to agree the decisions that the researcher had made during the data analysis process (Santos, Black and Sandelowski, 2015).

The researcher collected and recorded her Stage 3 field notes in Slovenian. She went on to translate four pages of these notes into English, to enable her academic supervisors to check the coding process and to ensure that the researcher's annotations reflected the field notes' content accurately. The Thematic Analysis process was also discussed during the researcher's supervisory meetings. The researcher used the same process that she had used previously to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of her translations; namely arranging for an independent Slovenian native speaker to back-translate all the study's codes, themes and sub-themes. Afterwards, the researcher debriefed the translator and then went on to check that their mutual understanding of the study's codes and themes was consistent.

5.7.3 Reflexivity

IPA and ethnographic research are both based on interpretive, reflexive and constructivist processes, making it vital for researchers to evaluate the ways in which their previous and on-going understandings, beliefs and attitudes might influence the research process and subsequent interpretation of the findings. In order to remain open to participants' worlds, IPA and ethnographic researchers must use reflexivity to acknowledge their own understandings and to then hold these back (Finlay, 2008). The researcher was both reflective and reflexive

during the research process; keeping a reflective diary throughout, and most intensively during the data analysis process (Appendix A), in order to examine her on-going research activities and enhance her research skills.

The reflexivity process goes beyond the above, however, encompassing on-going introspection and mindful interactions. Reflexive researchers are able to reflect upon themselves as researchers, upon any contextual factors that might inform the phenomena studied and upon their interactions with participants (Sandelowski and Barroso, 2002). In the current research, these precepts required the researcher to be reflexive about her previous professional and personal experiences, working as an occupational therapist and interacting with older adults in her everyday life. These experiences necessarily informed her thinking about occupational engagement; a source of potential bias when collecting and analysing her study data. The researcher was also aware that she had to be reflexive when interacting with her study participants; constantly revising the nature of her verbal and non-verbal communications as a result. Finally, it was important to use the reflexivity throughout the data analysis process, especially with regards to the study's contextual factors. The researcher comes from the same sociocultural and historical background as the participants; making it important for her to stay open to the participants' unique experiences, without making any assumptions based on her own understanding of these factors.

5.7.4 Member checking

'Member checking' has been acknowledged as an important qualitative research tool; enabling study participants to confirm that researchers understand their worlds correctly (Bryman, 2012). 'Member checking' as a validation strategy has been seen as less appropriate in IPA studies, however, since IPA is an interpretive method, using a 'double hermeneutic' as an important element of its data analysis process (Larkin and Thompson, 2012). Researchers' attempts to make sense of participants' sense-making may be challenging to present back to participants. Using 'member checking' in interpretive studies poses a risk to studies' rigour, due to a 'halo effect' whereby participants may overemphasise the researcher-developed concepts (McConnell-Henry *et al.*, 2011). It is therefore suggested that 'member checking' be used in single-case IPA studies, rather than in studies with multiple participants, where the method may be counter-productive (Larkin and Thompson, 2012). Having reviewed the literature, and considered the matter carefully, the researcher decided not to use member checking as a method to ensure rigour in the current research.

5.7.5 Triangulation

Triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data to study a particular phenomenon (Bryman, 2012); with the intention of enhancing the credibility, dependability and confirmability of studies' findings. The researcher used the same care home in Stages 2 and 3 of the current study. Although Stage 2 focused on participants' occupational engagement throughout their

transition into a care home, and Stage 3 focused on care home residents' occupational engagement as a group, the findings from these two stages support one another; contributing to the study's quality.

High quality qualitative research is based on trustworthy findings, with actions taken to ensure such trustworthiness an important part of the qualitative research process. Despite this, it is important to acknowledge that the criteria for ensuring qualitative findings' quality are more flexible than in comparable quantitative research (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The ontological and epistemological position of the current research, which sees reality as subjective and unique for each individual, makes it challenging to determine appropriate criteria with which to assess the quality of the qualitative research process (Bryman, 2012). The researcher used the above methods wherever possible, but she acknowledges that limitations remained. These limitations will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

Overall discussion

6.1 Introduction

This study explored Slovenian older adults' engagement in occupations and the ways in which transition into a care home influenced these occupations. The research process involved three stages. The first stage focused on the experiences of a sample of older Slovenian adults' engagement in meaningful occupations while they were still living independently in their own home environments. The second stage of the research explored the influence of moving into a care home on these occupations; using a longitudinal approach to investigate time points during their transition. The third stage then focused on the ways in which one Slovenian care home's residents engaged in their everyday occupations and the impact of a care home environment on their occupational engagement.

This chapter synthesises the findings from the three research stages; discussing the key findings critically with reference to existing knowledge and theory from the fields of occupational science and gerontology (Figure 10). The meaning of occupation, as part of participants' identities, was embedded throughout the study findings and highlighted as a vital part of maintaining their sense of health and well-being. Participants' interactions with the people and places in which their occupations occurred also influenced their everyday lives and the meanings that they attached to their occupations. The chapter

concludes by acknowledging the limitations of this research and the potential impact of these limitations on the research findings.

Figure 10: Main themes for the overall discussion



6.2 The significance of occupation and identity

The importance of participants' engagement in occupation was evident across all three stages of this study, suggesting a close link between such engagement and people's personal identities. Individuals' engagement in occupation is

closely related to their sense of self (Carlson *et al.*, 2014), with Wilcock (1991) suggesting that what people do is who they are. Older Slovenians living at home, and those making the transition into a care home confirmed this link by identifying themselves through their engagement in their everyday occupations. For example, one female participant used the metaphor 'made of a farmer's dough' to express her perception of herself; illustrating her view that productive occupations had been embedded throughout her life as an important part of who she was. The researcher's observational data, and the informal conversations that she held with the care home's residents, confirmed occupational engagement as the main feature of their everyday lives, focusing particularly on those occupations that they enjoyed. The link between people's identities and their occupational engagement has been acknowledged by a number of theorists (Christianson, 1999; Wilcock, 2006; Kielhofner, 2008). Individuals' experiences of occupational engagement and their occupational identities are idiosyncratic and unique (Hammell, 2004; Ikiugu, 2005). The first two stages of the current research offered a valuable insight into this area, highlighting that occupational identity was important throughout participants' lives, including the period of their transition to care home living. However, individuals are also part of, and shaped by, their social and/or collective identities, via their membership of varied social and cultural groups (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009). The last stage of the current research highlighted the embedded nature of occupation at the level of a culture-sharing group, among the residents of one Slovenian care home.

The importance of participants' occupational identities throughout their lives was reflected in the ways that they expressed their experiences of occupational

engagement over time. Participants referred back to their past experiences, introducing their occupational engagement in the form of life stories. McAdams (2012) suggests that people's narrative identities are expressed when they construct life stories, in order to make sense of their lives. The current research participants certainly appeared to want to introduce their occupational lives in a coherent and continuous manner. However, their stories went beyond a simple chronological explanation of their occupational engagement at different life stages. Instead, they reflected on the embedded nature of meaningful occupation throughout their lives, illustrating their development as occupational beings (Wilcock, 2006). For example, one female participant remembered being taken to the theatre for the first time by her parents as a child. Although her engagement in visiting the theatre had varied, over the years, she had continued to nurture this meaningful occupation as an important part of her occupational identity into her later years. Although individuals' occupational identities evolve over time, with changing life circumstances, people seek a sense of continuity in their occupational identities (Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt, 2008).

6.2.1 Meaningful occupation and continuity

The continuity of participants' occupational engagement became particularly evident when they referred to their most personally meaningful occupations. The concept of 'meaning' is a vague construct that is difficult to define (Ikiugu and Pollard, 2015). In his book about the development of the self, Kegan (1982, p. 11) wrote that 'the activity of being a person is the activity of meaning-making', suggesting that no human experience is without meaning. In similar

fasion, Hammell (2004) stated that every experience of occupational engagement is meaningful; although occupational meanings can be either positive or negative. The current research focused on the positive aspects of meaning, exploring older people's meaningful occupations as fulfilling 'a goal or purpose that is personally or culturally important' (CAOT, 2002, p. 36). Most of the participants reported that they had first started to engage in their chosen meaningful occupations in their younger years and had continued to do so throughout their lives, trying to maintain them in later life, including throughout their transition into a care home. One female participant, who had enjoyed raising flowers as a child, continued to be a keen gardener. Another man, who had been an athlete in his youth, continued to engage in regular sports activities in old age.

The above examples contrast with common assumptions about what people can or should do at given life stages (Njelesani *et al.*, 2015). Such assumptions include the ways in which occupational engagement is experienced by people in different age groups (Weinblatt, Ziv and Avrech-Bar, 2000). Older people are often seen as experiencing a decline in their physical abilities and strength, which impact upon their occupational engagement (Haak *et al.*, 2009). Numerous theories have been developed in further understanding of the ageing process and people's occupational engagement (Havighurst and Albrecht, 1953; Tornstam, 1989; Baltes and Baltes, 1990). For example, Activity Theory suggests that continued physical and intellectual activity underpin successful ageing (Havighurst and Albrecht, 1953), whilst the Theory of Gerotranscendence argues that older people become less occupied and more selective about the activities in which they engage across the years (Tornstam,

1989). Although elements of both of these theories can be found in the current research findings, neither addresses the issue of 'meaning'; a significant influence on participants' continued engagement in particular occupations. Such discrepancies suggest that existing ageing theories tend to generalise older people's occupational engagement, failing to acknowledge the idiosyncratic nature of individuals' experiences of meaning (Creswell, 2014).

People's experiences of meaning, in the occupations in which they engage, are significant in maintaining their identities and sense of well-being (Ikiugu, 2005; Hasselkus, 2011). For instance, one participant, who had held a social activist role in her local community, started to advocate for her co-residents after she moved into a care home; allowing her to maintain this meaningful role. In contrast, a male participant who had been a professional musician decided not to join his care home's choir because he only experienced meaning in music-related occupations at a professional level. A study by Tatzer, van Nes and Jonsson (2012) found that older women's engagement in personally meaningful occupations was essential to maintaining their identities throughout their lives and important for adapting to new circumstances in later life. Older adults in a study by Marshall and Mackenzie (2008) also acknowledged that continuing to engaging in personally meaningful occupations after relocating to a care home contributed to the success of their adjustment to their new living environment. Ikiugu (2005, p. 107) conceived meaningfulness as 'an attractor for the occupational-life-trajectory'. The current research takes this concept further, however, indicating the importance of continuity of meaning in occupation throughout the transition into a care home. The older Slovenians who took part in the current research highlighted the importance of maintaining their

personally meaningful occupations, routines and roles, throughout this transition period, as a vital part of their identities.

6.2.2 Cultural meaning in occupation

Current research participants' engagement in personally valued and meaningful occupations was also linked closely to their cultural contexts. Although considered unique to each individual (Hammell, 2004; Ikiugu, 2005), the meanings and values that people attach to their occupations are also informed by their wider historical and cultural contexts (Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt, 2008). However, this individualised perspective of culture and history is not without its critics. Occupational science has been criticised for linking occupational identity to individual people; thereby failing to acknowledge broader collective notions of the concept (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009). This wider cultural link was demonstrated in the current research with, for example, most participants valuing such occupations as looking after their homes and families, gardening and/or profession-related activities; occupations which, they emphasised, gave them a sense of productivity. Although the importance of work-related occupations amongst older adults has been acknowledged elsewhere (Bambrick and Bonder, 2005; Reynolds, Farrow and Blank, 2012), these studies explored productive occupations primarily. The current research main focus was on older Slovenians' occupational engagement, with participants raising the significance and meaning of work-related occupations that gave them a sense of productivity, spontaneously. It is likely that participants were influenced by the work-orientated culture of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Grandits and Taylor, 2010). The

power of working people, and the importance of work as a part of Yugoslavian culture, was emphasised in that country's constitution (Constitution Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1974); potentially embedding it in the occupational identities of the older Slovenians who participated in this research. Participants' age makes it likely that they will have been influenced by this political system, and its resulting policies, which will have dominated much of their lives.

Most of the current research participants also identified the personal importance of outdoor occupations, such as mountaineering, hiking, spending time outdoors and enjoying nature. This finding may have been influenced by participants' residence in a particular geographical area, with transactional views of occupation linking people's relationships with their local contexts to meaning in the activities that they undertake (Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006). Slovenian culture is shaped by the country's mountains and Slovenian people are considered enthusiastic about outdoor occupations (Carey and Clark, 2013). Geographical influences on human occupation are acknowledged in the occupational science literature; with landscapes being shaped by the history of human activity (Hudson *et al.*, 2011). The current research findings suggest the converse; that particular landscapes may inform people's occupational choices and the shared meanings that they then attach to their chosen occupations.

Although the current research participants referred to some traditional occupations during their individual interviews, these references were more evident during the final ethnographic study stage. This outcome may have been due to the fact that the researcher's observations offered an opportunity to

observe the residents collectively engaged in traditional occupations such as colouring Easter eggs and singing traditional songs. Traditional occupations have been identified elsewhere as meaningful to older adults (Hocking, Wright-St Clair and Bunrayong, 2002; Tzanidaki and Reynolds, 2011; Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013); providing personal satisfaction, connections to the past and to family and a sense of national identity. Although traditional occupations were both observed and referred to by the current study participants, they more linked tradition to family-related occupations. These links will be discussed in later sections of this chapter.

6.2.3 Occupation in relation to health and wellbeing

All three stages of the current research indicated that occupational engagement had a positive effect on participants' health and well-being. This finding is consistent with the results of previous qualitative studies showing the benefits, for older people's sense of health and well-being, of engaging in personally meaningful occupations (Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Liddle, Parkinson and Sibritt, 2013). The older Slovenians who took part in the current research, whether they were living at home or making the transition to care home living, also experienced a greater sense of health and well-being when they undertook such occupations. Wilcock (1998, p. 110) defined health as 'a balance of physical, mental and social well-being, attained through socially valued and individually meaningful occupation' and well-being is considered as 'a state of contentment or harmony' (Hammell and Iwama, 2012, p. 387).

Several participants reported that they felt healthier and more content when they were engaging in personally meaningful occupations. For example, one participant said that she felt healthier when she was cycling, and two others said that their usual health concerns receded when they were engaged in activities that they enjoyed. A randomised controlled trial conducted in the USA (Lifestyle Redesign®) found that participants' engagement in personally meaningful occupations, as an occupational therapy intervention, led to significant improvements in their health, function and quality of life (Clark *et al.*, 1997, 2011). A similar health-promoting program, 'Lifestyle Matters' is being proposed in the UK (Sprange *et al.*, 2013), with post-intervention interviews, conducted as part of a feasibility study, already indicating benefits from this occupation-orientated intervention (Mountain *et al.*, 2008).

In keeping with the above, the current research participants who found that their transition had reduced their opportunities to engage in personally meaningful occupations felt frustrated and powerlessness; denting their sense of health and well-being. The importance of free choice and personal autonomy was also highlighted by Atwal, Owen and Davies (2003); whose group of British care home residents also reported being deprived of some personally meaningful occupations and routines by the home's institutional policies. Occupational deprivation, as a form of occupational injustice, is defined as 'a state of preclusion from engagement in occupations of necessity and/or meaning due to factors that stand outside the immediate control of the individual' (Whiteford, 2000, p. 201). Current research participants appeared to experience occasional occupational deprivation, due to care home rules and regulations over which they had no control.

The current research findings also highlighted that maintaining health became an important occupation, with participants describing their purposeful engagement in health-promoting occupations, such as preparing healthy meals and undertaking physical activity, to maintain their health, vitality and independence. This finding may reflect participants' adoption of the World Health Organisation's concept of active ageing (WHO, 2009). This concept is promoted widely in Slovenia (Čuk, Lončar and Zupanec, 2007), seeking older citizens' and local communities' active involvement in promoting and enhancing older people's health and quality of life. In an expert opinion paper, Wilcock (2007b) argues that active ageing initiatives offer a good chance to promote occupation as a vital source of health and well-being for older populations. Several participants in the current research reported that health-promoting occupations had become an important part of their daily lives, in particular engagement in physical activity which they saw as helping to combat the challenges of old age. Qualitative analysis by Dionigi, Horton and Baker (2013) supported this perception; showing that older adults saw sport as an important and helpful way to negotiate the ageing process.

The need to engage purposefully in health-promoting occupations became ever more apparent, when the older Slovenians who took part in the current study moved into or lived in care homes. Although participants' health influenced their ability to undertake everyday activities, several said that they had made healthy eating or physical exercise a part of their daily routines to maintain control over their health. The Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986) states that 'health is created by being able to take decisions and have control over one's life circumstances'.

Also, one element of Wilcock's occupational perspective of health is 'becoming'. Although this dimension is usually related to change, and people's development as occupational beings (Wilcock, 2006), it also refers to managing and maintaining in order to achieve occupational well-being (Hitch, Pépin and Stagnitti, 2014a). In keeping with the above, the current research participants perceived their purposeful engagement in health-promoting occupations as a way to control their health. The researcher's observations also revealed that the studied care home residents often talked to each other about ways in which they could safeguard their health in order to stay active and engage in their everyday activities for as long as possible. Although the participants perceived benefits from their occupational engagement, for their health, they also perceived good health as a prerequisite for their continued occupational engagement. The current research thus highlighted the relationship between occupation and health as two-way. Kosma, Bryant and Wilson (2013, p. 179) also acknowledged this reciprocity; describing Wilcock's occupational perspective on health as a 'circular argument'. In Kosma and colleagues' (2013) view, health is achieved through occupational engagement, but the latter depends on individuals' levels of health. The current research participants' attitudes towards their continued maintenance of 'occupation for health' and 'health for occupation' echoes this earlier interpretation, supporting the principles of active ageing and emphasising the significance of 'optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age' (WHO, 2002, p. 12). By continually maintaining this two-way process between occupation and health, the current research participants strived to keep their occupational identities and enhance their quality of life into their later years as they entered care home life.

6.2.4 Adjusting engagement in occupation

Although the current research participants strove to maintain the continuity of their engagement in meaningful occupation throughout their lives, relocating to a care home sometimes required a degree of adjustment. Some of the changes found came from experiencing a number of simultaneous life transitions (Dapice Wong, 2015), with participants entering old age, experiencing increased ill-health and/or giving up previously enjoyed occupations such as driving. Older adults in a study by Wright-St Clair, Kerse and Smythe (2011) reported that engaging in their everyday activities brought home the fact that they were ageing. This was also the case for some of the participants in the current research. The compensatory strategies that they developed, to remain independent and in control of their daily lives, included becoming more selective in the occupations that they chose. For example, one female participant, who enjoyed walking around the city centre, planned in advance how often and where she would take a break. Other participants also reported having to change their daily routines after moving into a care home. The continuity theory of ageing (Atchley, 1989) suggests that older people use their past experiences continually for strategies to help them to adapt to the challenges of old age. The Theory of Selective Optimization with Compensation (Baltes and Baltes, 1990) also suggests that older adults engage in an adaptation process in order to adjust to new life circumstances. According to Baltes and Baltes (1990), older adults become increasingly selective about their engagements; optimising their attributes and compensating for their lost abilities. Despite the current research participants' attempts to adjust their occupational engagements to meet life's

challenges, they still tried to maintain their life-long occupations. Although both the Continuity Theory and the Selective Optimization with Compensation Theory seek to explain the ways in which older people adapt to new life challenges, they fail to acknowledge the reasons for this adaptation, which is to maintain the continuity of their occupational identity (Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt, 2008). The current research identified the importance of continuous occupational engagement throughout the life span, including whilst making the transition to a care home, despite the need to adjust to challenging life circumstances. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, with older adults adapting to their changing abilities, in order to maintain their independence and consequently their control over their occupational engagement (Dunèr and Nordström, 2005; Janssen and Stube, 2013).

Most of the current research participants sought to continue to engage in later life in the same occupations that they had previously enjoyed; a view unchanged by their transition into a care home. A few participants became more selective in the occupations in which they wished, or did not wish, to engage. The Disengagement Theory of Ageing proposes that the ageing process commonly leads individuals to withdraw from their previous activities and social roles (Cumming and Henry, 1961). The theory could also be seen as discriminatory (Harris, 2007), with occupational science research highlighting the importance of occupation in older adults' lives (Bedding and Sadlo, 2008; Reynolds, 2010; Wright-St Clair, Kerse and Smythe, 2011). However, people may see some occupations as more central to their occupational identities than others; prioritise these occupations over others when they face challenging life circumstances (Unruh, 2004). For example, some of the current research

participants did not mind adjusting or even giving up some of their occupations, as long as they were able to maintain their most personally meaningful ones.

Ageing, and leaving their original homes behind, increased participants' awareness of the occupations that were most central and meaningful. These findings are in line with the Theory of Gerotranscendence (Tonstam, 1999), which suggests that many older adults reach a new life perspective, becoming more contemplative and selective in their chosen activities. The current research findings echo this theory's view that older adults seek to prioritise their most valued activities and sometimes abandon those less important ones (Wadensten, 2003; Meriano and Latella, 2009). Whilst this theory applies to some of the current research participants, it applies less well to those care home residents, who were not always able to continue to engage in their personally meaningful daily routines and occupations. For example, one visually-impaired participant became unable to take his usual morning walks, after he moved into a care home, due to the unfamiliarity with his new physical environment. In similar fashion, the researcher's care home observations showed that residents were sometimes deprived of previously undertaken occupations, such as ironing, for safety reasons. Given the importance that participants accorded to productive occupations in Stage 1 and Stage 2 interviews, such deprivation is likely to have had a significant adverse effect on residents' well-being. Similar findings were reported in a study by Palacios-Cena *et al.* (2016), when care home residents were not allowed to engage in certain occupations due to safety concerns.

The ethnographic stage of the current research highlighted that care home residents who found themselves unoccupied sometimes took up available activities simply to fill their time. This exposure to meaningless occupation has been found to lead to 'occupational alienation' (Durocher, Gibson and Rappolt, 2014); a 'prolonged experience of disconnectedness, isolation, emptiness, lack of a sense of identity, a limited or confined expression of spirit, or a sense of meaninglessness' (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004, p. 80). In the current research, care home residents with decreased mobility were observed to be most at risk from such a lack of occupational opportunities: sometimes being left seated in the same place for a long period of time, waiting for a meal or simply doing nothing. A lack of occupational opportunities, 'having nothing to do', has also been reported by care home residents in other studies (Gustavsson, Liedberg and Larsson Ranada, 2015; Palacios-Cena *et al.*, 2016); with the literature acknowledging that boredom is the common result (Martin, Sadlo and Stew, 2012; Wilcock, 2006). However, the fact that Stage 3 findings are based on observations rather than individual interviews, makes it impossible to know whether some residents may actually have enjoyed not being actively engaged. For example, Van't Leven and Jonsson (2002) found that some of the care home residents in their study enjoyed just being present in the environment with other residents, without actively participating in the available occupations. The literature highlights that, sometimes, people value times of no engagement that allow them to reflect upon their experiences and to simply exist in time and space (Donovan *et al.*, 2005).

6.2.5 The meaning of everyday routines

While everyday routine activities may be seem mundane, due to their repetitiveness and predictability, the older adults who took part in all three stages of the current study found them important. Hasselkuss (2011, p. 71) suggests that these 'behavioural patterns' are formed of occupations that create a sense of familiarity in people's daily lives and represent an important part of their identities (Clark, 2000; Hasselkuss, 2011). The individual interviews, conducted in the current research, indicated that these occupations were more than simple routines, with some of them having deep personal meanings for the participants concerned. The literature differentiates between routines and rituals, with the latter having symbolic meanings attached (Fiese, Foley and Spagnola, 2006; Hasselkus, 2011). For example, some participants carefully described their morning routines of drinking coffee, reading newspapers or wishing their grandchildren a good day at school. These older Slovenians experienced these daily rituals as deeply meaningful; a significant part of their occupational identity. Continuity of meaning is considered vital for maintaining people's identities (Ikiugu, 2005). These findings, from the current research, concur with those of Wright-St Clair, Kerse and Smythe (2011), in which participants also reported a level of deep meaning from their routinized occupations. Cooney (2011) also found that the continuity of care home residents' personal routines contributed to their sense of home and a feeling of control over their lives.

Transitioning into a care home can disrupt older adults' ability to maintain their everyday routines and rituals. People's ability to engage in everyday routines

that they have developed over the years enables them to pursue other occupations that are even more meaningful (Hasselkuss, 2011). However, interviews with the older Slovenians who were making the transition to a care home indicated that some of their usual routines had been challenged and had required adjusting. The tension between participants' desire to pursue their preferred routines, and constraints imposed by the care home's institutional routines, has also been acknowledged elsewhere (Nussbaum and Coupland, 2004). The literature highlights that residents are frequently required to adjust their daily routines to fit in with their care home's institutional schedules (Mali, 2008; Harnett, 2010; Eysers *et al.*, 2012). Although Mali's study (Mali, 2008) was conducted in a Slovenian care home, it included staff and relatives, as well as residents. It is likely that the views of these three disparate groups will differ.

The current research findings indicate that, not only were participants' routines disrupted by their care home's institutional routines, but they were also affected by the individual routines of other residents. The latter was especially the case where participants had to share facilities with other residents. For example, one participant said that she no longer felt that she had her own life, because she had had to adjust to her roommate's evening routine. Research has certainly shown that some changes in life circumstances have required individuals to reformulate their occupational identities (Unruh, 2004). However, one person's cherished routines may be another's burden (Corbin, 1999). Care home residents' inability to undertake their preferred daily routines may result in occupational deprivation; caused when people are barred from personally meaningful occupations by factors beyond their control (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004).

The interviews conducted six months after participants had moved into a care home indicated that some individuals had developed new daily or weekly routines in their new living environment. For example, some participants had started to collect a daily newspaper or to have coffee with others after lunch. These findings were largely echoed in the researcher's care home observations. In Slovenia, care homes are large social institutions where residents' behaviours are regulated by the homes' norms, rules and administrative structures (Hojnik-Zupanc, 1999). In the current research, the institution's practices required residents to share some of their daily routines with others. For example, residents were obliged to have their meals at particular times or to cease socialising in the home's communal areas when the care home closed for the day. In similar fashion, Gustavsson, Liedberg and Larsson Ranada (2015) found that care home residents engaged in two types of occupations; those that they undertook individually and those that they shared with other residents and/or members of staff. The current researcher's observations and informal conversations indicated that residents experienced these shared routines in a paradoxical manner. For example, whilst they complained about the lack of flexibility in their home's meal times, they also found comfort in knowing in advance exactly when meals would be served. This paradox is echoed elsewhere in the literature, with existing studies acknowledging that residents see their institution's routines as both restrictive (Mali, 2008; Harnett, 2010; Eysers *et al.*, 2012) and security-inducing (Gustavsson, Liedberg and Larsson Ranada, 2015). The current research findings highlight that when participants felt deprived of their usual daily routines

and rituals, their most meaningful occupations helped them deal with these challenges of transition and helped them adjust to their new living environment.

The current research findings also highlighted that participants often linked particular meanings to their preferred occupations. Victor Frankl, a psychotherapist and Nazi concentration camp survivor, suggested that people are motivated by a search for meaning in life (Frankl, 1969), and that maintaining meaning throughout challenging life events is significantly important (Frankl, 2006). Although Frankl's idea may not be directly transferrable to older people in care homes, previous studies have acknowledged the importance of meaningful occupations after moving into a care home and throughout the subsequent adjustment period (Van't Leven and Jonsson, 2002; Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008). The findings of the current research show that meaningful occupations play a vital role when care home residents are unable to engage in their usual daily routines. They also indicated that the care home's institutional practices restricted some residents whilst giving others a sense of comfort and security from a known routine. Overall, the current research findings highlighted that the continuity of everyday routines and meaningful rituals was an important part of participants' occupational identities, which were important for them to maintain throughout their transition into a care home.

6.3 Social aspects of meaningful occupation

The participants reported that other people also played important roles in their lives, by influencing their everyday occupational engagement. The occupations which they undertook were linked to the roles that they developed in relation to

these other people; a concept described by Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx (2012) as 'relational identity'. For example, being a family member or a friend influenced several occupations in which these older Slovenians engaged, either with others or alone. Christiansen (1999, p. 577) suggests that people's identity 'shapes and is shaped by their relationships with others'. However, occupational science has been critiqued for placing more emphasis on the individual, when discussing occupational engagement, rather than discussing occupations that foster connections with others, such as belonging and contributing to communities and groups of people (Hammell and Iwama, 2012; Hammell, 2014). In some social contexts, collective dimensions have a significant influence on people's occupational choices and occupations involving other people represent an important part of individuals' occupational identities (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009). For example, Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson (2002) found that occupations that related to other people were particularly meaningful for Slovenian people's sense of well-being. The findings of the current research confirm this, although the current participants particularly highlighted the significance of family-related occupations. Whilst they also saw non-family members as important, this link was less evident throughout their transition into a care home.

6.3.1 The role of family in occupation

The interviews that were conducted with older Slovenians who were still living at home, and those making the transition into a care home highlighted the importance of participants' family connections and roles. Some of the participants' most cherished life roles were those of parents and grandparents,

leading to occupations such as looking after their family homes or helping their children by looking after their grandchildren. Whilst in many Western cultures older people do not live in the same homes as their children (Bonder, 2006; Harris, 2007), it is very common in Slovenia for younger generations of a family to live near to, or in the same house as their parents (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002). As a result, social networks are significantly important within Slovenian families in Slovenia; with intergenerational collaboration being considered a reciprocal process (Hlebec, Kavčič and Ogulin Počrvina, 2013).

Family-related occupations reported by the current research participants included spending time together (e.g. sharing meals, going hiking), having regular responsibilities (e.g. looking after grandchildren) and receiving assistance from adult children with everyday activities (e.g. visiting shopping centres). Some of these occupations could be referred to as 'co-occupations', based on shared meaning between family members (Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow, 2009), although co-occupations require several people to engage in an occupation at the same time and place (Pierce, 2003; Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow, 2009). The latter was not always the case for the current study participants. For example, whilst hiking together is truly a co-occupation, cooking for the whole family is family-related but does not meet the above criteria. Morgan (2011) referred to such occupations as 'family practices'; activities which relate to other family members. Family practices are also evident in previous Slovenian studies conducted with older adults (Čurič, Križaj and Pirnat, 2013; Lebar *et al.*, 2014); although these studies were based on undergraduate research, with methodology and methods that were poorly described.

The current research findings further indicate that some participants perceived some of their family-related occupations overwhelming. For example, one man explained that daily responsibility for his grandchildren meant that he had to postpone some of his meaningful occupations. Other researchers have also found that looking after grandchildren can have a negative impact on older adults' meaningful occupations (Menks Ludwig *et al.*, 2007) as well as their physical and emotional well-being (Marken and Howard, 2014). Most of the grandparents enrolled in the latter two studies were primary caregivers, whereas the current research participants were not. Despite this, the older Slovenians who took part in the current research felt a strong commitment to these family roles, and associated occupations, seeing them as an important part of their occupational identities (Kielhofner, 2008).

The importance of family-related occupations was particularly evident for those participants who were in the process of making the transition to care home, as their families helped them to settle into their new living environments. These findings build upon work by Kornhauser and Mali (2013), whose participants also highlighted the importance of family help during their care home adjustment period. In addition to receiving help from their families, the current research participants also enjoyed spending time with their families because this had been an important part of their lives before they had decided to relocate into a care home. Co-occupations, such as sharing a family meal or going to a weekend cottage together resulted in the emergence of shared meanings between family members (Hasselkus, 2006; Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow, 2009).

The reciprocal nature of participants' family relationships gave them a sense of security, knowing that they could count on their families' help if needed. For example, one participant depended on his son's help, after he moved into a care home, to take him on weekly visits to the nearby shopping centre or cemetery. Bonder (2006) acknowledged the importance of reciprocal giving and receiving, between older adults and their families, but her study was conducted in a US context, with the participants that were not moving into a care home. Other studies have given relatively less importance to family-related occupations, during participants' care home transition period (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Mulry, 2012; Walker and McNamara, 2013). This difference might occur because the latter studies have been conducted in countries where individualism is prioritised over interdependence within families and communities (Hammell, 2014). In contrast, the current research participants reported that transition into a care home deprived them of some of their previous family-related occupations. For example, two female participants said that they had previously looked after their family homes; preparing meals for three generations. These activities had given them a sense of productivity and had been important parts of their personal identities. One of these participants emphasised that she had mostly decided to relocate into a care home because the move enabled her to continue to care for her husband, as she had when they had both been living at home.

Family roles were an important part of the current research participants' occupational identity. The importance of continuity, between care home residents' past and present roles, has also been acknowledged elsewhere

(Minney and Ranzijn, 2015), with a study by Kantartzis and Molineux (2014) indicating that engaging in family-related occupations reconfirms a family's identity. An earlier Slovenian study by Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson (2002) highlighted that occupations that connected the adult participants, and enabled them to contribute to their families and friends, were significantly meaningful. This study did not, however, involve older people. The current research findings confirmed this earlier work, with several participants expressing the importance of occupations that fostered a sense of connectedness and of belonging to their families. Unruh (2004) acknowledged that challenging life events sometimes led individuals to prioritise some occupations over others. For example, one of the female participants in the current research realised, after she had relocated into a care home, that her family was where she 'found' herself. The transition period had enabled her to become more aware of her most meaningful occupations, several of which were linked to her sense of belonging to her family. 'Belonging' is considered an important aspect of people's occupational engagement, and therefore a part of their occupational identities (Wilcock and Hocking, 2015). The above participant was referring to her occupational identity; acknowledging that her relocation had led her to prioritise her range of family-related occupations.

The reciprocal relationship between the participants and their families, noted above, was less evident during the ethnographic stage of this research. Instead, the researcher's observations highlighted the importance that family visits had for the care home residents; providing a valuable link to their previous home environments. In the care home setting, the importance of the above-described family-related occupations was particularly evident in the way that participants

addressed visits from their families as opposed to visits from other people. For instance, residents usually interacted with their visitors in the care home's lounge or garden, but took many of their visits from family members in their own rooms. A study completed in Slovenia by Mali (2008) also showed that family visitors linked residents to the outside world and to their homes. As previously mentioned, this finding may relate specifically to the Slovenian context, as many Slovenian care home residents will previously have lived near to, if not with, their children and grandchildren (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson (2002).

Some of the current research participants' meaningful co-occupations were closely linked to their relationships with their spouses. For example, one participant shared his most personally meaningful occupation (travelling) with his wife. However, after she died, the meaning that he experienced in this occupation changed. A study by van Nes *et al.* (2012) highlighted the importance, for older people, of maintaining the continuity of their co-occupations, as the latter contribute to their identity as a couple. As previously discussed, meaning is generated through shared experiences of occupational engagement, with the continuity of that meaning helping to maintain individuals' occupational identities (Ikiugu, 2005; Nyman, Josephsson and Isaksson, 2014).

6.3.2 The role of other social connections in occupation

In the current research, participants who lived at home and those living in a care home, found maintaining their social contacts and friendships with people outside their family groups important. These findings support a transactional perspective of occupation (Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006), suggesting that

individuals are in a constant interaction with their contexts through their occupations. Hammell (2014) further argues that the need to connect with other people, and 'belong', are important to people's occupational engagement; contributing to their well-being and life satisfaction. By contrast, the current research participants who were in the process of transition into a care home did not raise the issue of maintaining their previous social contacts. As noted by Bridges (2003), individuals' transition extends beyond their actual relocation; being experienced at different speeds by different people. These findings differ from those of other studies, in which care home residents have highlighted the importance of maintaining their social contacts soon after the relocation (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Cutchin, Marshall and Aldrich, 2010; Jonsson and Bibbo, 2014). The current research participants' enjoyment of time spent with their families throughout their transition into a care home echoes the findings of previous Slovenian research (Kornhauser and Mali, 2013). However, not all of Kornhauser and Mali's (2013) participants were able to recall their relocation experiences retrospectively, limiting the study findings.

Once they had moved into a care home, some of the current research participants tried to maintain their external contacts and previous friendships. This finding is consistent with work by Marshall and Mackenzie (2008), which highlighted that maintaining long-term friendships helped participants to adjust to a new living environment. In the current research, the observations made and the informal conversations held also indicated that some residents attended a range of social events, outside their care home, on a regular basis. A Slovenian study by Mali (2008) reported that residents differentiated between their lives within, and their lives beyond, their care home; seeing these two worlds as

separate. For the care home residents who took part in the current research, having an occupational life outside the care home environment both enabled them to avoid certain institutional routines and gave them a sense of control over their everyday occupations. For example, those residents who attended community social events, in the evening, returned after the care home had closed for the day. Although they sometimes complained about having to call the night staff, in order to let them into the building, they also expressed satisfaction about having a social network that extended beyond the care home environment. Maintaining these links has also proven important in previous studies (Marshall and Mackenzie, 2008; Falk *et al.*, 2012).

In contrast to Stage 2, the researcher's interviews with participants who were living at home, and longer-term care home residents, revealed that social connections were both significant and linked closely to activities that participants enjoyed and found meaningful. Both Stage 1 and Stage 3 indicated the importance, for these older Slovenians, of engaging in group and community-based activities; as reported elsewhere (Piškur, Kinebanian and Josephsson, 2002). Current research participants who were still living at home said that they enjoyed participating in their local communities. Several of the long-term care home residents that the researcher observed also enjoyed group-based activities such as sharing meals or singing together. These findings highlight the importance of socialising with others, whilst sharing joint occupations, for creating a sense of group belonging. Co-occupations, such as arts and crafts, playing chess or celebrating national holidays, are all based on shared meanings, with meaningful occupations contributing to people's health and well-being (Clark *et al.*, 1997; Bedding and Sadlo, 2008).

Such co-occupations as the above had varied meanings for the current research participants; providing a sense of connection, an opportunity to reminisce and a chance to develop friendships. Meaningful co-occupations clearly contributed to this group of older people's sense of belonging, and vice versa; highlighting the interdependence of 'doing' and 'belonging'. Wilcock (2006) conceptualises occupation as a synthesis of 'doing', 'being', 'becoming' and 'belonging'; a prerequisite for people's health and well-being. Although these concepts have been addressed in the occupational science literature, they have not been explored or applied in depth to date (Kosma, Bryant and Wilson, 2013). Hitch, Pépin and Stagnitti (2014b) noted the paucity of the existing evidence about the relationship between 'doing' and 'belonging' in particular. The findings of the current research add to this evidence; indicating the interconnectedness of these two concepts. Whilst participants' personally meaningful occupations depended on their sense of 'belonging' to their families and friendship groups, their sense of belonging depended on their occupational engagement with other people.

This research also revealed that some care home residents were reluctant to engage in occupations with others; preferring to be alone or to spend time with only likeminded people, even if the latter were hard to find. The importance of conversing with others has also been identified elsewhere (James, Blomberg and Kihlgren, 2014; Jolanki and Vilkkö, 2015), with Swedish care home residents saying that talking to other people made them feel human (James, Blomberg and Kihlgren, 2014). The current research adds to the existing

findings in this area by showing that that simply conversing is insufficient; with the value coming from conversing with 'someone you can talk to'.

6.4 The meaning of place in occupation

All three stages of the current research indicated that participants' living environments influenced their occupational engagement. Rowles (2008, p129) describes people's living environments as 'being in place', referring to the ways that people use their environments. According to Wilcock (2006), 'being' is one aspect of occupational engagement; referring to people being occupational beings who exist in time and space. Several of the current research participants expressed their attachment to their home environments and local communities in relation to the occupations that they undertook there (e.g. gardening or having a morning coffee with their neighbours). Participant's attachments to these familiar places reflected the meanings that they assigned to their everyday occupations. Referring to the transactional aspect of occupation, Heatwole Shank and Cutchin (2010) suggested that familiar places were important sources of meaning in occupation for older women living at home, indicating that their participants' personally meaningful occupations were affected by moving into a care home (Heatwole Shank and Cutchin, 2010). Whilst the current research confirms these findings, its participants contribute a uniquely Slovenian perspective, namely their continuing attachment to their original homes and a constant negotiation between their old and new living environments. This was made possible by the fact that all six of the Stage 2 study participants continued to own, and to be able to access, their original properties after relocating into a care home.

6.4.1 Familiar places and meaningful occupations

The current research interviews highlighted that all sixteen of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 participants had lived in the same original homes for most of their lives. This finding may be specific to the Slovenian context, where people are disinclined to move (Mlinar and Štebe, 2004). Most participants had built their own homes and had then lived in them for several decades; creating many family memories and a deep sense of 'home'. A New Zealand study by Wiles *et al.* (2009) also found that older people's attachment to their homes was largely due to their sense of ownership and pride in having built the properties themselves. Having lived in their homes for several decades also led to their participants' everyday occupations being linked to their specific home environments; generating particular occupational meanings. In similar fashion, the older women taking part in Heatwole Shank and Cutchin's (2010) study reported that they found meaning from engaging in occupations in familiar places; strengthening their sense of connection to these places. Although the concept of 'belonging' was initially developed in relation to people's sense of connection to others (Rebeiro *et al.*, 2001; Wilcock, 2006), people also develop a sense of 'belonging' to the physical environment in which their everyday occupations occur (Huot and Rudman, 2010). Research into the meaning of 'home', for older adults, suggests that that environment provides a sense of familiarity and independence (Haak *et al.*, 2007; Haak *et al.*, 2008; Dahlin-Ivanoff *et al.*, 2007). Several participants in the current research talked about 'being in place', as described by Rowles (2008, p. 129); enjoying such activities as pottering around their houses. These occupations gave some of these

participants a sense of productivity. Other participants described everyday rituals, linked to their home environments. For example, one female participant referred to her afternoon rest on her balcony as 'her balcony beach'. Other participants referred to their home-based gardening activities, describing their gardens in endearing terms, using linguistic diminutives; further highlighting their strong attachments to their home surroundings.

The current research participants also linked personally meaningful occupations to their neighbourhoods and communities, as found elsewhere (Wiles *et al.*, 2011). For example, one participant had been active in local politics when she lived at home, another had enjoyed his morning walks along familiar paths and a third had taken daily morning coffee with a group of neighbours. A group of older adults from New Zealand (Wiles *et al.*, 2011) also reported that their home neighbourhoods gave them a sense of familiarity and intimacy. Giuliani (2003) suggests that contemporary society's mobility compromises a fundamental human need to be attached to a particular 'place'. The current study's findings indicated that this group of older Slovenians' had a strong attachment to their home environments; a concept that Tuan (1980) described as 'rootedness'; a state of strong familiarity based on continuous living in one place for a long time. For example, one of the current research participants referred to her husband's statement that he had no plans to leave their shared house in anything other than a coffin, as a way of expressing her own attachment to the family home.

The current research participants' occupations also reflected their attachment to the land and nation of Slovenia, emphasising the meaning of visiting particular

mountains or reading particular literature as a reflection of Slovenian national identity and/or cultural heritage. People's connectedness to a particular place has been seen in broad terms, encompassing their links with the land and with nature in general (Hammell, 2014; Iwama, 2006). The fact that moving house is uncommon in Slovenia (Mlinar and Štebe, 2004), may have reinforced participants' attachment to Slovenia as a country.

6.4.2 Negotiating place-related meaning in occupation

Current research participants' strong ties to their own homes may have increased the challenge of moving into a care home, as they had to detach themselves from their previously-loved environments. The informal conversations that the researcher held with the longer-term care home residents, showed that several had had to give up personally meaningful occupations because they were now living away from their familiar neighbourhoods and local communities. Familiar places play an important part in the ways that people generate and attach meaning to their occupations and routines, helping them to maintain their personal identities (Ikiugu, 2005; Hasselkus, 2011). Heatwole Shank and Cutchin (2010) suggest that relationships between a people and places are constantly being renegotiated. Rowles (2008, p. 130) described this process as going from being 'out of place' to eventually being 'in place', which is how some of the participants described the care home transition process. Moving from their own homes into a care home sometimes meant that participants had to re-negotiate the meanings that they attached to their everyday occupations. For example, one participant used the term 'solitary confinement', to refer to his new home environment,

exemplifying this concept of being 'out of place', as it required him to adapt his personally meaningful everyday routines. Lee, Simpson and Froggatt (2013) similarly described one participant's use of the term 'prison' to referring to his/her care home environment.

The fact that all six of the current research Stage 2 participants continued to own their own homes may have influenced their adjustment to their new care home living environment. Their continued home ownership meant that they could maintain their previous attachments to familiar places by visiting their family homes and weekend cottages, in which their families still resided. Maintaining ongoing links with a previous home, when moving into a care home, is a usual thing to do in Slovenia. In the current research, it meant that participants still referred to these places as 'home' and still engaged in their previous range of occupations when they were there. Granbom *et al.* (2014) also found that one of their participants remained unattached to her new care home living environment after three years, because her family had kept her previous flat. Granbom *et al.* (2014) noted that this outcome was an exception, however, unlike in the current research study, where it was the norm.

6.4.3 Developing a sense of 'home'

The literature suggest that bringing elements, such as furniture, from a previous home environment helps new care home residents to transfer their sense of home and its meaning to their new environment. The interviews conducted with the current research participants after six months living in the care home, as well as the researcher's ethnographic observations highlighted that some

participants had started to feel a part of the care home community. Bringing some of their own personal belongings into the care home setting contributed to this process. In similar fashion, a Slovenian study by Mali (2008) also found that care home residents' ability to keep some items from their home environments helped them with the separation process. The current researcher's observations further indicated that some residents referred to their rooms as their home; suggesting that they had acquired a sense of 'home' after living in a care home in the longer term. Rowles and Watkins (2003) described this process as one of transforming 'space' into 'place'; people transferring experiences from their previous living environments into their new ones. The current research indicated that participants were transferring and adjusting their usual ways of occupational engagement to their new living environments, whilst renegotiating the meanings that they attached to their occupations.

The ethnographic stage highlighted that participants' ability to develop a sense of 'home', in the care home setting, was of vital importance to them. Although residents' rooms were private, their feelings towards the home's communal spaces, in which they ate, socialised and engaged in shared group activities, were also important. The care home residents in a study by Cooney (2011) also highlighted the importance of their setting's communal spaces in developing their sense of 'home'. Some of the residents in the current research were satisfied with their care home's physical environment and atmosphere, but others perceived it as limiting; a final location before dying. This latter view echoed the way in which the care home environment was seen by participants elsewhere (Johnson and Bibbo, 2014). In the current research, it was evident that the care home's physical environment offered varied opportunities to

residents with differing occupational needs and wishes. For example, the home's interior offered ample seating and a bar where residents could order a drink; outdoors there were multiple places to sit and a nearby park, which provided a convenient place to visit. However, sometimes the home's indoor environment was busy and residents complained that the noise disrupted or prevented activities that they would have enjoyed. The importance of the physical environment in developing a sense of 'home', in a care home setting, has also been found elsewhere (Bradshaw, Playford and Riazi, 2012; James, Blomberg and Kihlgren, 2014). Cooney (2011) devised the Theory of Finding Home, to address these issues, emphasising the importance of factors such as the continuity of the home's routines, the opportunities given to residents to preserve their personal identities and issues of 'belonging' as vital to the process of developing a sense of 'home'. The findings of the current research highlighted that these elements were also important to the Slovenian older adults who took part, especially when they were making the transition from their home environment into a care home.

6.5 Limitations of the research

All research has its limitations, which must be acknowledged so that any resulting effects can be evaluated and discussed (Patton, 2015). The researcher will now outline the weaknesses of the current research with regard to its methodology, methods and the transferability of its findings.

6.5.1 Critique of the methodology

The first two stages of the current research were approached by using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA); drawn from the philosophical positions of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This methodology, as well as the approach to data analysis enabled the researcher to explore individual older Slovenians' experiences of engaging in personally meaningful occupations and the ways in which these occupations were affected by the transition into a care home. IPA has been subject to a degree of critique in the research literature (Giorgi, 2010; Chamberlain, 2011; Todorova, 2011), as previously discussed. For example, one of Giorgi (2010) noted that IPA's non-prescriptive nature makes studies conducted from this perspective difficult to replicate and therefore hard to check with regard to the quality of their findings. IPA researchers' use of a 'double hermeneutic', during their data analysis processes (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), also makes the possibility of precise replication of IPA research questionable. To address such concerns, IPA researchers should provide detailed paper trails of the research process; as the current study researcher

has done. It is impossible to provide audit trails of researchers' interpretations, however, as these relate to individuals' personal cognitive processes and contextual factors. The steps proposed by Smith (2010), to ensure the quality of IPA studies, have been followed in the current research study.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) noted the challenges for novice researchers of incorporating interpretative phenomenology, with a double hermeneutic, into IPA. This view reflects the current study researcher's experience. The interpretative aspect of such analysis is also sometimes seen as moving away from participants' meanings; limiting the research findings (Pringle *et al.*, 2011). The use of reflexivity in the current research helped the researcher to remain open to participants' experiences, while at the same time maintaining an awareness of her own subjectivity.

The idiographic aspect of IPA, with its commitment to individuals and the use of small study samples, has also been seen as the weakness of the IPA approach (Pringle *et al.*, 2011). However, IPA studies aim to provide rich data about participants' experiences in particular contexts. They make no claim about their findings' generalisability, but instead seek to enable readers to evaluate and decide the extent of studies transferability to other people or contexts. Individuals' experiences of occupation, and the meanings that they attribute to these experiences, are unique (Hammell, 2004; Ikiugu, 2005). This view led the researcher to choose IPA as the most appropriate research methodology and method for the current study.

Stage 3 of the current study consisted of a small ethnographic study, conducted with the residents of one Slovenian care home. The researcher observed residents' engagement in their everyday occupations and the influence that the institution had upon this engagement. Ethnography was chosen in order to answer the related research question, as it seeks to elicit understanding of culture-sharing groups, by exploring what group members say and do (Hammersley, 2006). Although ethnography was considered as an appropriate approach to achieve the study's aims, the researcher used a 'focused ethnography' approach, with observations that lasted for only two weeks and focused particularly on the residents' occupational engagement. No other data collection methods were used in Stage 3. Focused ethnography has been seen as superficial (Knoblauch, 2005), but the time taken to complete the first two stages meant that time constraints did not allow the ethnographic final stage to be longer. The use of additional data collection methods (e.g. interviews), with observations carried out over a longer period of time, would have enabled the researcher to explore the topic in greater depth and thereby to have obtained deeper insights. The current research provides a valuable foundation for future research on the topic of Slovenian care home residents' occupational engagement.

6.5.2 Critique of the research methods

The following paragraphs present a number of potential limitations in the current research methods before going on to consider ways to address these limitations in future research.

6.5.2.1 Recruitment processes and sampling

The researcher initially planned to recruit participants for Stage 1 through Slovenian local senior organisations and clubs, but only three older adults responded. The recruitment process was accordingly adjusted, with additional participants being located via the researcher's professional and personal contacts. Although the latter may be seen as a limitation of this study, as it could be seen as convenience sampling, the study 'gatekeepers' determined in advance the participants' ability to answer the Stage 1 research question. In addition, the researcher ensured that she did not know the potential participants in advance; meeting them for the first time at the time of their first interview.

The Stage 2 participants were recruited through the social worker employed in one Slovenian care home. The recruitment process took longer than expected, as many of the residents admitted to the care home concerned, either had cognitive impairments or declined to take part in the study. This situation was unavoidable. Despite the time constraints, six older adults chose to participate.

In Stage 3 of the current study, the researcher conducted her observations in the same care home that she had accessed in Stage 2; facilitated by her previous collaboration with the care home's social worker. This situation may be seen as a potential influence on the researcher's observations. However, keeping a reflective diary, and using reflexivity throughout, enabled the researcher to highlight any potential biases that might have influenced Stage 3 data collection and data analysis processes.

6.5.2.2 Data collection processes

The researcher discussed the interview schedules and first interviews with her academic supervisors, with regard to the questions asked. Although the researcher considers the resulting questions and data gathered adequate, she acknowledges that her skills in asking questions and probing participants' replies improved throughout the study. On reflection, additional questions could have been asked to probe participants' responses during the initial interviews. This approach would, potentially, have increased the richness of the data gathered. The researcher acknowledges her role as a novice researcher and recognises the learning process that took part throughout the research process.

6.5.2.3 Data analysis processes

The idiographic aspect of IPA, with its commitment to the detailed analysis of individual cases, can be challenging (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The researcher found it challenging to analyse the data from the 28 interviews conducted in Stages 1 and 2 in terms of the time taken and the detail required. The researcher's data analysis process was checked and discussed, within the supervisory team, to ensure that her findings were interpretative, rather than becoming descriptive. Despite this, the data analysis process remained detailed and time-consuming. The researcher acknowledges that a smaller study sample would have enabled her to provide a more detailed exploration of the experiences and views of the individual older adults who took part.

In addition to the above, exploring meanings is challenging in cross-cultural studies; with languages' subtleties being hard to convey and prone to a loss in translation (van Nes *et al.*, 2010). In light of the above, the current researcher's choice to collect and analyse much of her data in Slovenian, with a later translation into English, has implications. This is particularly the case when the Slavic languages have been considered to be incompatible with English translation (Schneider, 2013). The researcher used several methods to ensure the quality of the translation process and the resulting credibility of the findings. Her decision to stay in the original language, throughout the data analysis process, was particularly crucial (van Nes *et al.*, 2010). The additional steps taken in this area have been discussed thoroughly in previous chapters of this document.

6.5.3 Issues related to the transferability of the findings

The findings of the current research increase understanding of Slovenian older people's experiences of engaging in meaningful occupation while living at home and throughout making the transition into a care home. The researcher's use of IPA enabled rich findings to emerge; the transparency of her presentation enhancing the findings' potential transferability to other individuals and groups (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The researcher's clear presentation and discussion of these findings, as well as her presentation of participants' verbatim quotes enables readers to evaluate the extent to which the findings can be transferred to their own research contexts. It is important to disseminate the study findings widely, through publications and presentations, in order for them to reach the people for whom they may make a difference.

The current research was conducted in Slovenia, making its potential transferability, in an international context, unclear. The existing research evidence indicates that there are differences in the ways that different cultural groups experience engagement in personally meaningful occupations (Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong, 2002). Individuals' occupational engagement, and the meanings that they attach to their chosen occupations, are also idiosyncratic. This makes attempt to generalise these concepts broadly both problematic and challenging (Pierce, 2001; Hammell, 2009). Given this, readers must judge for themselves the presented findings' potential transferability to individuals and groups in contexts beyond those studied.

Reflexive Commentary

<p><i>My thinking and knowledge around the research process has evolved throughout the six years I spent working on this project. Although there are no perfect studies out there, this process of learning is partially reflected in the study limitations. I could see throughout the process, how my development went hand in hand with the development of the research. The only difference I see between the two is that there is an end point to this project, whereas the development of myself as a researcher is ever-evolving, informing my future research engagements.</i></p>
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<p><i>I think that the combination of phenomenology and ethnography really enabled me to explore the topic from different perspectives. Although both of these perspectives were the participants', one of them focused more on the individual's experiences, whereas the other one adopted the perspective of a group of people, sharing a cultural context. However, in my future research, I</i></p>

would also like to try and use other approaches to explore engagement in occupation throughout the process of ageing, one of them being a narrative approach. This is especially because my individual participants' accounts in Stage 1 and Stage 2 were telling me stories about their lives. The interviews were much more than just exploring a particular topic (occupational engagement). They had the need to tell me their life story to reveal their identities to me. A similar thing happened, when I was having informal conversations with the residents of a care home. Sooner or later, I would be witnessing their life stories.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

7.1 Contribution to knowledge

The current research significantly contributes to the current understanding of older people's engagement in meaningful occupations and the influence of transition into a care home on these occupations. The research findings add to the occupational science body of knowledge; exploring occupation and meaning in one particular socio-cultural context. This study took place in Slovenia and this research is foundational, given the absence of Slovenian studies exploring older people's occupational engagement generally and specifically related to transition to a care home environment.

This study also makes an important contribution to the occupational science and occupational therapy knowledge base as a seminal longitudinal study, describing older people's meaningful occupational engagement as they transition into a care home. The researcher identified only two previous studies that explored older people's occupational engagement at different time-points throughout this transition although none of them was focusing on their experiences of engagement in meaningful occupations (Cutchin, Marshall and Aldrich, 2010; Walker and McNamara, 2013).

Finally, this study makes a notable contribution to the methodological approach of IPA. Firstly as a longitudinal study, as this is an evolving aspect of IPA

methodology. Secondly, the challenges of conducting IPA in a native language and making this accessible by translation into English has been a learning point from this thesis. The researcher being a native speaker and coming from the same cultural context enabled detection of specific nuances of the Slovenian language and context. However, this process opens up and contributes to further discussions around managing linguistic challenges of IPA research.

The three stages of this research built towards the overall research aim, with each stage contributing new, cumulative, understanding to the existing knowledge base. Stage 1 explored occupational engagement of ten older Slovenians; considering their most personally meaningful occupations as part of this. The researcher chose to research this area partly because only limited Slovenian evidence was identified on the topic. The findings highlighted that meaningful occupations and daily routines represented an important part of participants' identities, contributing to their sense of both health and well-being. The meanings that they attached to their occupations were informed by Slovenian socio-cultural, historical and physical context, including Slovenian geographical location. The participants gave particular significance to the role of productive occupations, such as gardening or looking after their homes and family-related occupations, such as organising family celebrations, looking after their grandchildren and passing knowledge to younger generations. Their meaningful occupations were also linked to particular places they belonged to, including spending time at their weekend cottages, walking familiar pathways, hiking in Slovenian hills and mountains or spending time in the surroundings of their home. These findings take forward and open discussion on the importance of a transactional perspective of occupation, emphasising that occupational

meanings are based on connections between people and their contexts (Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry, 2006).

Stage 2 of this research focused on exploring six older Slovenians' engagement in meaningful occupations before and during their transition into a care home. The researcher's decision to use a longitudinal research approach enabled her to explore participants' occupational engagement at three time-points; although the length of their individual transition period was unique. The findings indicated the significance of continuity, in terms of older people's engagement in individually meaningful occupations and routines, throughout their transition into a care home. They highlighted that their living environment and familiar places had a significant impact on the continuity of their occupational identity. Some occupations that were meaningful in their home environment became less meaningful or lost their meanings in the care home environment. A female participant who was very active in her local community club was not able to maintain the same level of activity after the relocation and the occupation became less meaningful for her. Similarly, a man who enjoyed his morning walks in the surroundings of his home was not able to continue with this occupation due to his disability of being blind and not being familiar with the pathways around the care home. Due to the institutional constraints or ill-health, the participants' occupational engagement, including their everyday routines sometimes required adjustment which led them to prioritise their most personally meaningful and health-promoting occupations. It was the continuity of meaning in occupation that contributed to the participants' maintenance of their personal identities. The findings highlighted that participants attributed particular meaning to their families, and to family-related occupations, during

the transition process. Participants expressed the need for other social engagements less often during this process.

With regard to the findings' contribution within the Slovenian context, all of the participants remained closely-linked to their previous home environments. This was possible because all of the older adults who took part in Stages 1 and 2 remained home-owners; as is common in Slovenia. Participants' strong attachment and sense of belonging to their families and homes influenced their occupational engagement; sometimes preventing them from adjusting to their new living environments. Although Stage 2 provided an occupational perspective on Slovenian older people's transition into a care home, this was focused on the first six months after participants' relocation. The findings of Stage 2 indicated the need for further research to explore care home residents' occupational engagement; providing a logical rationale for Stage 3.

The third stage was ethnographic in nature; exploring occupational engagement amongst the residents of one Slovenian care home as a culture-sharing group. Although the study was small, and the data collection was limited to observations, the findings highlighted the significance of occupation in older people's everyday lives, reaffirming the findings of the first two research stages. The researcher's observations further highlighted the significance of participants' everyday routines; encompassing both their individual and their institutional routines. Participants sometimes perceived the latter as barriers to their autonomy, resulting in experiences of occupational deprivation or alienation (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004). In contrast to the second stage, Stage 3 showed the value of occupations that involved social interactions

between the residents, indicating that social engagement may become increasingly relevant once residents have adjusted to their new living environment. The researcher's observations, as well as the informal conversations held, indicated that residents created a sense of 'home', in the care home environment, by engaging in occupations; based on close interactions with their context.

7.2 Implications for practice

The current research findings support the view that continuous engagement in meaningful occupation is closely linked to Slovenian older people's identity; contributing to their sense of health and well-being. This reaffirms occupational scientists' argument that people are occupational beings, needing occupation for their health and well-being and that they, therefore, have the right to engage in personally meaningful occupations (Townsend and Wilcock, 2004; Wilcock, 2007a).

Ageing is an international societal challenge (WHO, 2015), and the current research findings have potential implications for health and social care practice, both for older people who live at home and those who live in care home environments. Based on the findings indicating the significance of participants' engagement in meaningful occupations, older Slovenians living at home should be enabled to maintain these occupations for as long as possible. Older people in Slovenia often decide to relocate into care homes because of a lack of community-based services (Hvalič Touzery, 2007). The development of community-based occupational therapy services would enable Slovenian older

people to stay engaged in their personally meaningful occupations for longer; fostering their health and well-being and enabling them to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

For older individuals who relocate into care homes, the findings suggest that continuity in their engagement in meaningful occupations and routines, throughout this transition, is an important part of their personal identity. Care home social workers are the first point of contact for community-living older Slovenians who are seeking to move into a care home (Kornhauser and Mali, 2013). Although social workers' role is significant at this point, other professionals could also help to smooth the transition. For example, community-based occupational therapists could support older people to maintain their meaningful occupations and routines throughout their transition into a care home (Löfqvist *et al.*, 2013). Such therapists could also provide education to raise older people's awareness about the significance of meaningful occupations, throughout the care home transition period, thereby helping to enhance their health and well-being.

The current research findings also highlighted the importance that participants gave to family involvement and their engagement in family-related occupations. This suggests the potential value of offering education and counselling, about older people's transition to care home living, to family members. In the researcher's experience, the families of Slovenian care home residents are not currently familiar with this area. This approach could help older Slovenian people and their families to attend to individual older people's daily routines and the importance of transferring these to their new living environments. As

suggested above, community-based occupational therapists could collaborate with occupational therapists and other professionals working in Slovenian care homes, to facilitate the continuity of older people's occupational engagement; enhancing their sense of 'home' in their new living environments.

Finally, the current research findings can be used to inform the way that Slovenian care homes are managed. They suggest the potential advantages to be gained from care home managers adjusting their institutions' rules and regulations to better meet individual older adults' occupational needs. Examples might include allowing residents who do not have cognitive impairments to iron in their own rooms or allowing residents, in principle, to keep pets. Models of care currently exist which aim to deinstitutionalise the care home environment; through the inclusion of such elements as plants, animals and the encouragement of intergenerational collaboration with children (Byock *et al.*, 2009). The average Slovenian care home's capacity is 200 beds (Association of Social Institutions of Slovenia, 2015); resulting in highly institutionalised care. Such care cannot meet the needs of a heterogeneous group of older people (Mali, 2013). In addition, the findings of the current research could be used by the managers of Slovenian care homes to improve their institutions' living environments; increasing residents' opportunities to engage in personally meaningful occupations and routines. Care home managers could also use these findings to inform their decision-making processes, in terms of human resources. Although managers are limited by the current Slovenian care home standards, which determine the number of health professional working in such homes (Kobal Straus and Kalan, 2007), additional assistance could be provided by encouraging voluntary and/or student workers. Professionals, such as

occupational therapists could support these individuals, educating them about the significance of meaningful occupation for residents' health and well-being.

7.3 Implications for health and social care policy

This research has the potential to influence policy regarding the care of older people at a national and international level.

7.3.1 National implications

The care of older people in Slovenia is highly institutionalised, with a virtual absence of community-based services (Mali, 2013). The Slovenian governments' adoption of the Long-term Care Act and Healthcare and Health Insurance Act, which aim to encourage the deinstitutionalisation of care and the development of community services, has been repeatedly delayed (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016). The researcher proposes to introduce the current research findings to the governmental ministries proposing these Acts (Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities), with the hope that this might accelerate their adoption. Following the Acts' adoption, the research findings could help to influence the development of community-based inter-professional teams, offering services to community-living older people. Occupational therapists' focus on enabling people to engage in personally meaningful occupations should make them indispensable members of these teams. Such therapists could support community-living older people as well as those making the transition into a care home. They could also collaborate with health professionals working in

Slovenian care homes, to reduce the stress of new residents' transitions. In terms of the care homes themselves, this research could influence policy with regard to the human resources standards applied. The current staffing standards for Slovenian care homes, currently one occupational therapist per 150 residents (Kobal Straus and Kalan, 2007; Zavod za zdravstveno zavarovanje Slovenije, 2014), do not enable staff to meet the residents' needs. The findings can therefore contribute to a revision of the existing standards.

7.3.2 International implications

A recent assessment by the World Health Organisation states that current public health initiatives to address population ageing are ineffective internationally (WHO, 2015). Countries must step up their healthcare responses, to serve their growing number of older citizens, if they are to maximize their populations' health and well-being (United Nations, 2015). Although the findings of the current research may not transfer to other contexts, they indicate the need for further studies to exploring the benefits of meaningful occupation for older people internationally. The World Federation of Occupational Therapists' (WFOT) position statement on human rights emphasises that occupational engagement is a fundamental human right (WFOT, 2006). The current research contributes to the occupational science body of knowledge, reaffirming the value of both occupation for older people and occupational therapy as a profession.

7.4 Implications for future research

The current research indicates the need for further exploration into meaningful occupation for older people in Slovenia and beyond. The findings highlighted that the meanings that people attach to their occupations are influenced by their physical and socio-cultural contexts. This supports the need for further occupational science research to explore older people's occupational engagement in varied socio-cultural contexts and the influence of 'place' on their meaningful occupations. Moreover, further exploration of personal and shared meanings is needed in order to strengthen current understanding of humans as occupational beings.

The existing evidence in the area of older people's occupational engagement during their transition into a care home is limited, with no studies on this topic identified in Slovenia. Further research is needed to explore this transition from an occupational perspective. Such research would serve to enhance the breadth of current understanding on the impact that this transition can have on older people's occupational engagement, including their engagement in personally meaningful occupations, by considering varied contexts. The current research findings also indicated the benefits of using longitudinal research approaches to explore this topic at different time-points throughout older people's transition period. This approach enables researchers to explore older individuals' 'lived experiences' of this phenomenon, as it is experienced, thereby providing an invaluable contribution to the understanding of this phenomenon. Finally, further exploration of occupational engagement amongst care homes

residents is needed, in Slovenia and elsewhere, to best understand their occupational needs and thereby improve the quality of their everyday lives.

7.5 Closing Remarks

This research contributes original knowledge and adds new understanding of older people's engagement in occupation. It highlights the significance of the continuity of meaningful occupation in shaping individuals' identities across their lives, including during their transition into a care home. The findings highlight the significant role of the Slovenian socio-cultural context, generating individual and shared meanings for older adults, participating in this research. By exploring older Slovenians' occupational engagement in different living environments, this study also provides new knowledge about the influence of place on older people's meaningful occupations, reaffirming the transactional perspective of occupation. The findings support the case for increased recognition of the importance of meaningful occupation for older people; be they living at home, undergoing a transition into a care home, or already residing in a care home setting. This interconnection between people and place, including its influence on the meaning in occupation should be strongly considered by occupational therapists, working with older people.

This is a seminal piece of research, given that no Slovenian studies were identified exploring older people's transition into a care home from an occupational perspective. The findings may also be transferrable to individuals or contexts in other countries, contributing to the identified lack of evidence outside Slovenia. Finally, this research indicates the need for further exploration

of older people's occupational engagement, in different cultural contexts and at different time-points throughout the transition from their home into a care home environment. The researcher hopes that this study will contribute to creating opportunities for older people to engage in personally meaningful occupations before, during and after transition into care homes, as a way to enhance their health and well-being.

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Appendix A: Researcher's reflection example

Analysing Bor – on going. Today I was analysing the part where he talked about his weekend place. Talking about sitting on the hill and looking down across the valley made him feel very emotional and he started crying. I noticed there are so many similarities between different participants in terms of their attachment to their homes or weekend places. But it wasn't just the attachment to these properties, but more the attachment to everything that happened in those places – all the events, family gatherings, building the cottages with their own hands, spending time with neighbours etc...these places were full of memories. However, I also realised all this is very familiar to me, because it reminded me of my childhood. My grandparents had a weekend place where they would usually had plenty to do around the cottage and we would spend time there, together as a family...that was just something we would do naturally...on Sundays, or during holidays. Analysing the participants' stories and reflecting on my childhood made me realise this is just something the majority of families in Slovenia would do and that was very much influenced by our socio-cultural and political system. Since people didn't travel a lot back then, and the system encouraged building houses etc., people would build weekend cottages and spend time there...gardening, pottering around and be with their families. However, it is very important for me to be aware of these similarities and reflect on them so that my childhood memories do not affect the data analysis of my participants' transcripts.

Appendix B: Information letter for Seniors' clubs (Stage 1)

Information Letter

Date: XXXXX

I am a PhD student at Plymouth University (UK), conducting a research in the field of occupational therapy.

Title of study: Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations

My area of interest is older people's engagement in personally meaningful occupations. This is the first stage of my research project in which I am particularly interested in exploring Slovenian older people's individual experiences of engagement in their everyday occupations and which occupations have meaning for them.

This would involve five members of your Senior club spending an approximately one hour long interview, conducted by myself. The interview may take place wherever is convenient for every individual, who decides to participate. Any information given by them will be strictly confidential, their anonymity within the study will be preserved and will be used only for the purpose of this research study.

I would ask you to forward the attached information letter to potential participants who can then decide if they are interested in participating in this research. In case they are, I would ask them to contact me via below contact details. If that is inconvenient for them, I am happy to contact them, but they need to give you the permission to forward their contact details.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Tanja Krizaj, PhD student

Tel.: 031 542 887

E-mail: tanja.krizaj@plymouth.ac.uk

Contact details of my supervisor:

Dr. Anne Roberts, Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer)

Plymouth University

School of Health Professions (Faculty of Health, Education and Society)

United Kingdom

Telephone number: +44 (0) 1752 588874

E-mail: anne.roberts@plymouth.ac.uk

Appendix C: Information letter for the participants (Stage 1)

Recruitment Letter/ Information about the Research (stage 1)

Date: xxxxxxxx

I am a PhD student at Plymouth University (UK), conducting a research in the field of occupational therapy.

Title of study: Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations

My area of interest is older people's engagement in personally meaningful occupations. This is the first stage of my research project in which I am particularly interested in exploring Slovenian older people's individual experiences of engagement in their everyday occupations and which occupations have meaning for them.

I am inviting you to take part in this study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve. Please read the information below and take time to decide.

Literature suggests that the key factor contributing to people's health and well-being is the person's experience of meaning in what they do. Since enablement of meaningful occupation is recognised as core domain of occupational therapists, they are required to explore the concept of occupation. Exploring older people's personal experience of engagement in occupations could bring additional knowledge and understanding to occupational therapists about which occupations are meaningful to older people. It could influence how occupational therapists plan their interventions with older people and also how eldercare is planned and implemented.

There were no research articles found in Slovenia on the topic even though foreign literature suggests that cultural background could influence the meaning of occupations. That means that engagement in meaningful occupations could be experienced differently among Slovenian older people than in other countries.

If you choose to participate, the study would involve an interview with me at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview would last approximately one hour and would be recorded with a Dictaphone and transcribed. Later on I would ask you to check the transcript, to make sure it is accurate.

Please be assured that all the information that you give would be strictly confidential. The recordings would be kept locked away and would be destroyed five years following the research project. If any quotes are used in the final report or for the purposes of publication, they will be kept anonymous. All participant information will be anonymised using pseudonyms instead of real names.

Your participation in this research would be completely voluntary and you may decline it. There will be no consequences, should you do so. You can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

If you decide to take part in the study, I will ask you to sign a consent form and I will give you a copy of it. You will also have the opportunity to check your transcript and discuss the findings.

If you are interested to participate in this study, and or require further information then please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Tanja Krizaj
UL – Faculty of Health Sciences
Occupational therapy department
Zdravstvena pot 5, 1000 Ljubljana

Telephone number: (031) 542-887

E-mail: tanja.krizaj@zf.uni-lj.si

Contact details of my supervisor:

Dr. Anne Roberts, Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer)

Plymouth University

School of Health Professions (Faculty of Health, Education and Society)

United Kingdom

Telephone number: +44 (0) 1752 588874

E-mail: anne.roberts@plymouth.ac.uk

Appendix D: Interview schedule (Stage 1)

Thank you for participating in this interview and for signing a consent form, which emphasized your right to withdraw from the study at any point. All the information you give will be strictly confidential and the recordings will be kept locked away.

- Can you start by telling me how you spend your ordinary day?
- Which activities/ occupations do you enjoy the most?

- Among all occupations that you have just mentioned, which of them do you find the most enjoyable or most important to you?
- Can you tell me more about being engaged in this meaningful activity/occupation?
 - How do you feel while being engaged in it?
 - Would you describe one example of being engaged in this meaningful occupation?
 - Have this activity always been meaningful to you?
 - How did it become to have such meaning for you?

- What if you are not able to engage in meaningful occupation/s ? How do you feel?
- Would you like to tell me anything else about being engaged in your meaningful occupations?

Appendix E: Data analysis (IPA) example (Stage 1)

Name (pseudonym): Tone

Initial comments	Transcript	Emergent Themes
<p>Having a garden as a meaning (<i>he uses I, not We?</i>)</p> <p>Checking what 'needs to be done'</p> <p>Making a plan and preparing for planting</p> <p>Garden obligations as meaningful?</p> <p>The will for working in the workshop</p> <p>Being aware of his health problems</p> <p>Being aware of his capabilities</p> <p>Introducing his workshop to his grandchild</p> <p>Being intolerant to other's attitude towards his tools. <i>Does he feel powerless regarding that?</i></p> <p>The importance of having order in the workshop</p> <p>Being aware of his limitations</p> <p>Being proud of his past work (<i>self-admiration</i>)?</p> <p>Adjusting his work to his capabilities</p>	<p>J: Yes, well even before lunch I go to the garden, I have a garden over there, I check what needs to be done, I just told my wife earlier, that we have to plant potatoes, and I have everything ready over there for planting the strawberries.</p> <p>Then I sometimes check my workshop if anything needs to be done, I have a lot of will for working, even though I'm not so well, I have rheumatism, you know. If I would work hard things, I would have a hard night.</p> <p>T: But you still work at your workshop?</p> <p>J: Yes, I do.</p> <p>T: What kind of workshop is that?</p> <p>J: It's a joiner's workshop. My grandson works a lot there now, he comes down, does a little work, he looks for the tools, and then I look for the tools as well, because they never return it to the same place, you know I liked to keep order. Tool kit in one drawer, the electric machines in another place, and they have to be clean. So it's clean and tidy. And I have the will to work, but I don't do hard physical work anymore. But if you look around the house, everything of wood is my work. I made 50 kitchens after I retired.</p> <p>T: So you still work now, but less?</p> <p>J: A little less... small things, like a frame or a wooden board which I engrave, so....</p>	<p>HAVING A GARDEN</p> <p>PLANNING THE WORK IN THE GARDEN</p> <p>THE WILL FOR WORKING IN HIS JOINER'S WORKSHOP</p> <p>AWARENESS OF HIS HEALTH PROBLEMS</p> <p>PASSING OVER THE WORKSHOP TO HIS GRANDCHILD</p> <p>BEING SENSITIVE ABOUT TAKING CARE OF THE WORKSHOP</p> <p>THE IMPORTANCE OF ORDER IN THE WORKSHOP</p> <p>AWARENESS OF PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS</p> <p>ADJUSTING HIS WOODEN PRODUCTS TO HIS CAPABILITIES</p>

Initial comments	Transcript	Emergent Themes
<p>The help of his children with enabling of meaningful occupation <i>(he sounds very excited when he's talking about this)</i></p> <p>Accepting new tool which enable easier engagement in meaningful occupation</p> <p>Planning of the afternoon with his wife <i>It's important to him to discuss and adjust things with his wife?</i></p> <p><i>The importance of wife's occupations?</i> Adjusting to new circumstances</p> <p>Wife as his 'safety net'? Being aware of his problems</p>	<p>And just now my daughter bought me for my birthday..., I had a wood cutter for cutting wood out, for engraving... but now she bought me the electric one for burning into wood.</p> <p>T: Oh, that's excellent. For help...</p> <p>J: Yes, and it's very easy to use.... so...</p> <p>T: So what about afterwards?</p> <p>J: Me and my wife, usually we talk about what we're going to do. For instance, she says: shall we go to Svibenj (it's a hill where people go hiking) and I said I'm not up for it.</p> <p>T: Is that a hill?</p> <p>J: Yes, that's a hill nearby, my wife goes regularly, I also walked up that hill until recently, but now I go half way. There's one place there, I walk slowly you know..., she goes ahead and then we call each other with cell phones, but I can't stand long, my legs and arms begin to hurt.</p> <p>T: So, you do that in the afternoon?</p> <p>J: Yes.</p> <p>T: What about then?</p>	<p>THE ROLE OF CHILDREN WITH ENABLING OF MEANINGFUL OCCUPATIONS</p> <p>ACCEPTING NEW TOOLS</p> <p>PLANNING HIS OCCUPATIONS WITH HIS WIFE</p> <p>ADJUSTING HIS EVERYDAY HIKING WIFE'S ROLE WITH HIS OCCUPATIONS AWARENESS OF HIS ABILITIES</p>

Initial comments	Transcript	Emergent Themes
<p>Emphasises taking his god with him (important). Observing and admiring the results of his work Growing new, different fruit, not so common in this area. <i>He feels proud about that.</i></p> <p>The importance of sharing his harvest (fruit) with his family and friends. <i>It seems as it's very important to him to show that to his friends.</i> Problems with his stomach (<i>fear can be felt in his words</i>)</p> <p>Taking the time to rest while engaging in meaningful occupations Spending time with his neighbours and friends who are the same age The importance of wife's occupations <i>Adjusting to one another regarding their occupations is important to him?</i></p>	<p>J: Well, then I go down where I have a cellar, and I take my dog with me and then I look around the garden, the apricot tree started to bloom today, you know I have a little bit like a tropical fruit. I have kiwi, kaki, <u>the sort of fruit that grows in Primorska region</u> (the seaside region of Slovenia). So I grow lots of kaki fruit.</p> <p>T: Oh?</p> <p>J: Yes, so that our whole family and also our friends can get a bag of those. So the garden keeps us busy, but I can't be bent down for a long time, because I get this pain in my stomach, <u>mhm...</u> something is wrong with my stomach.</p> <p>T: Nothing serious, I hope?</p> <p>J: Well, I have checkups now regarding this.</p> <p>T: So do you take a rest while working in the garden?</p> <p>J: Yes, I take a rest. I have a bench over there, now when it's a nice weather, I sit down and then I have a talk with my neighbour, he's the same age as I am. Then maybe a friend comes and we talk a little. And then my wife says I'm going to take a hike to <u>Svibenj</u>, and I say ok, I'll just check on our fishes, you know we have a little fish pond over there.</p>	<p>ATTACHEMENT TO HIS DOG OBSERVING THE RESULTS OF HIS GARDENING BEING PROUD OF GROWING SPECIAL FRUIT</p> <p>SHARING HIS FRUIT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS HEALTH PROBLEMS</p> <p>TAKING A REST WHILE BEING ENGAGED IN OCCUPATIONS SPENDING TIME WITH HIS FRIENDS WIFE'S ROLE WITH HIS DAILY OCCUPATIONS</p>

Appendix F: Superordinate and Emergent Themes - example (Stage 1)

Pseudonym: TONE

Super - Ordinate Themes	Emergent Themes
First and second meaningful occupation (Gardening and joiner's work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garden as useful The favorite harvest Responsibility towards trees Special fruit Gardening outcomes Feeling proud Enjoyment Harvest sharing Feeling excited Feeling relaxed Knowledge about gardening Joiner's work as hard Father's influence The wish of having his own workshop The meaning of quality The machine Sensibility regarding the workshop Belonging to Joiner's association Feeling satisfied Loosing track of time Feeling desperate
Having daily responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment to his dog Morning routine Responsibility towards a dog Responsibility towards goldfishes Watching daily news The meaning of a daily newspaper 1st part of the newspaper (the most important) Morning ritual Responsibility towards grandchildren Responsibility towards health issues The meaning of early rising Evening ritual Responsibility towards his home Taking other's responsibility (daughter, son-in-law) Responsibility towards the garden Responsibility towards pets Planning his joiner's work Planning his work in the garden Planning his daily occupations The meaning of order Doing 'the best job possible'
Adjusting occupational engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting new tools Simplifying work Shortening of hiking route The importance of rest Avoidance of conflict situations Being prepared to adjust to new abilities Being aware of his abilities Health issues as limitations 'Not being able' as unimaginable

The value of knowledge/improvement	Education about gardening The importance of opinions The importance of general knowledge Knowing current Slovenian politics Interests for new things Education about improvements Accepting new ways Improving his home Improving his workshop
Spending time with other people	Children's help Grandchild as follower Importance of wife's role Old acquaintances Spending time with friends Harvest sharing Discussing politics Loosing friends Other's expectations Making impression on others Belonging to Joiner's association

Appendix G: Superordinate themes for each participant (Stage 1)

Superordinate Themes for each participant – 1st stage

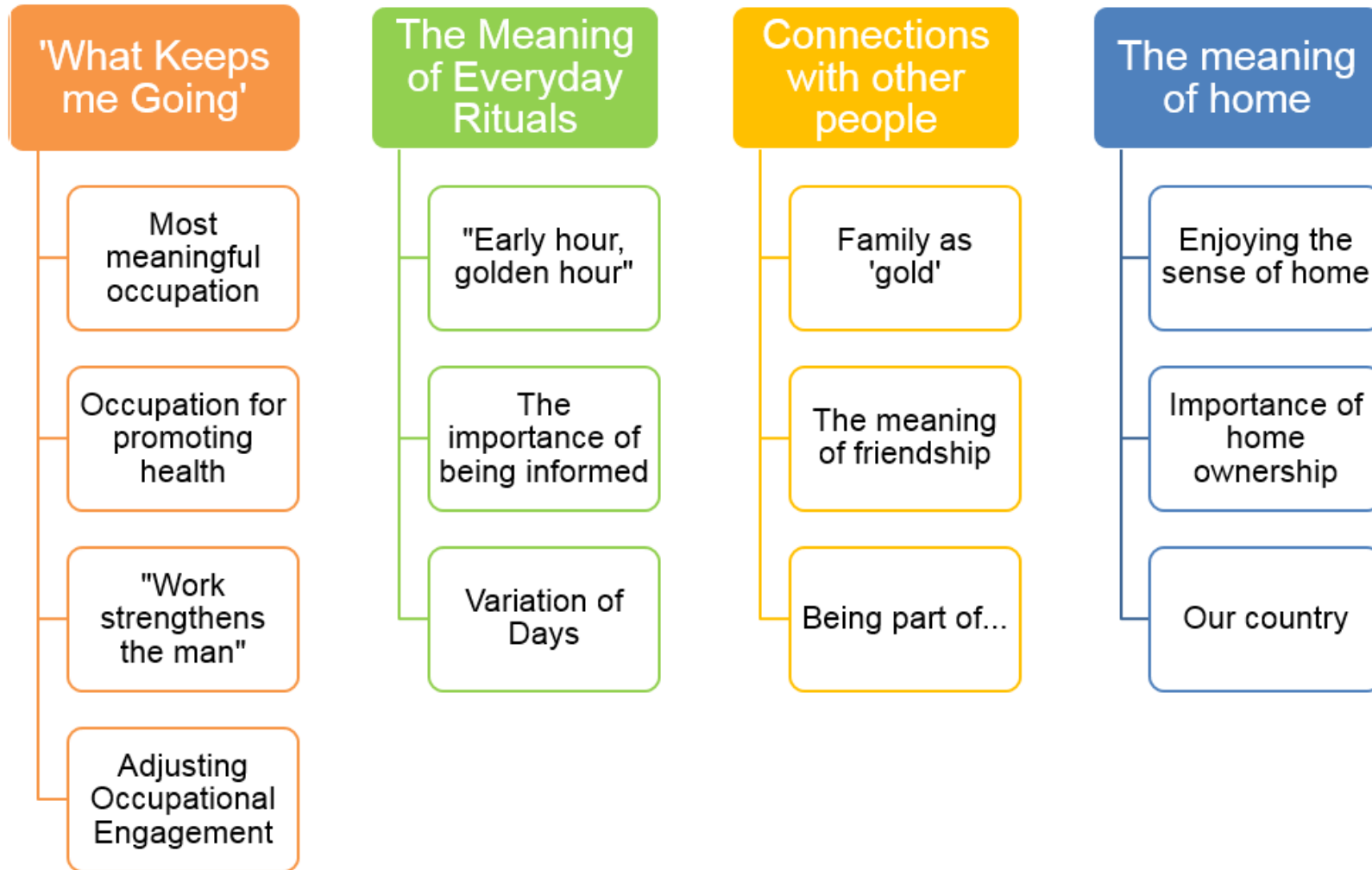
KRISTINA	PETER	JERA	TONE	ROZI	ROBERT	META	MITJA	LIDIJA	LEON
Making every day routine meaningful	The meaning of traveling together	Walking alone	First and second meaningful occupation	The meaning of being a farmer	The meaning of being a surgeon	'Flowers and music'	The meaning of 'fitness' occupations	The meaning of gardening	Sport as a lifelong occupation
Adjusting occupational engagement	Self-transformation	Diversity of days	Adjusting occupational engagement to this current abilities	Everyday farm rituals	Significant others	Maintaining her everyday rituals	Occupations dependent on time and place	The role of other people with her occupational engagement	What he really enjoys doing
Cultural occupations throughout her life	The value of family	Occupations for socialising	The value of further development/ knowledge	Family as 'gold'	Health through physical activity	The value of regular social occupation	Developing through occupations	My home	Having a formal role
Maintaining connection with other people	Everyday obligations	Obligatory occupations	Having responsibilities	'Free moments'	The importance of time with occupations	The meaning of work	Every day routine	Every day as meaningful	Particular days for particular occupations
The value of maintaining health	Learning through culture	The meaning of home	Spending time with others	The value of home	Perceiving-self	Adjusting her occupational engagement	Other people's role within his occupations	Occupations for health	Other people's role with his occupations
Determination through experiences	Photography as his 'hobby'	Connections with her family				The value of family relationships	The meaning of work	The meaning of work	
Enjoying home	The role of other people	Adjusting her occupations to her health issues				The surroundings of her home	Having a role	Adjusting her occupational engagement	

Legend (looking across ten cases for Master Themes):

'What Keeps Me Going' The Meaning of Everyday Rituals Connections With Other People The Meaning of Home

Appendix H: Master themes with subthemes

1st stage - Master Themes – Across Cases



Appendix I: Information letter (Stage 2)

Information about the Research

Date: xxxxxx

I am a PhD student at Plymouth University, conducting a research in the field of occupational therapy.

Title of study: Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations

My area of interest is Slovenian older people's engagement in occupations which are meaningful or enjoyable to them. This is the second stage of my research project in which I am particularly interested in exploring their individual experiences of engagement in enjoyable or meaningful occupations in the process of moving into a care home.

I am inviting you to take part in this study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve. Please read the information below and take time to decide.

Occupational therapists enable people to be engaged in meaningful occupations, therefore they are required to explore the topic. This particular study is important because it could influence how occupational therapists plan their work with older people in care homes and also how eldercare in Slovenia is planned and implemented.

If you choose to participate, the study would involve an interview with me **three-times:**

- at the time of being admitted to a nursing home (still living at home)
- 1 month after the admission to a nursing home
- 6 months after the admission to a nursing home

The interviews would last approximately one hour and would be recorded with a dictaphone and turned in to a written account.

Please be assured that all the information that you give would be strictly confidential. The recordings would be kept locked away and would be destroyed ten years after the research project. Your name won't be used in any written account of what you said, instead I will use a made up name.

Your participation in this research would be completely voluntary and you may decline it. There will be no consequences, should you do so. You can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

If you decide to take part in the study, I will ask you to sign a consent form and I will give you a copy of it. If you wish, you will also have the opportunity to check your transcript and discuss the findings.

If you are interested to participate in this study, and or require further information then please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Tanja Krizaj, PhD student
University of Plymouth
Faculty of Health, education and society
School of Health Professions

Telephone number: (031) 542-887
E-mail: tanja.krizaj@plymouth.ac.uk

Contact details of my supervisor:
Dr. Anne Roberts, Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer)
Plymouth University
School of Health Professions (Faculty of Health, Education and Society)
United Kingdom

Telephone number: +44 (0) 1752 588874
E-mail: anne.roberts@plymouth.ac.uk

Appendix J: Interview schedule (Stage 2, 1st interview)

Thank you for participating in this interview and for signing a consent form, which emphasized your right to withdraw from the study at any point. All the information you give will be strictly confidential and the recordings will be kept locked away.

- Can you start by telling me how you spend your ordinary day?
- Which activities/ occupations do you enjoy the most?
- Among all occupations that you have just mentioned, which of them do you find the most enjoyable or most important to you?
- Can you tell me more about being engaged in this meaningful occupation?
 - How do you feel while being engaged in it?
 - Would you describe one example of being engaged in this meaningful occupation?
 - Have this occupation always been meaningful to you?
 - How did it become to have such meaning for you?
- What if you are not able to engage in meaningful occupation/s ? How do you feel?
- Do you think that your relocation to a care home could influence your engagement in meaningful occupations? Why?
- Would you like to tell me anything else about being engaged in your meaningful occupations?

Appendix K: Interview schedule (Stage 2, 2nd and 3rd interview)

Thank you for participating in this interview and for signing a consent form, which emphasized your right to withdraw from the study at any point. All the information you give will be strictly confidential and the recordings will be kept locked away.

- Can you start by telling me how you spend your day here in your new home?
- Which activities/ occupations do you enjoy the most?
- Among all occupations that you have just mentioned, which of them do you find the most enjoyable or most important to you?
- Can you tell me more about being engaged in this meaningful activity/occupation?
 - How do you feel while being engaged in it?
 - Would you describe one example of being engaged in this meaningful occupation?
 - Have this activity always been meaningful to you?
 - How did it become to have such meaning for you?
- What if you are not able to engage in these occupations? How do you feel?
- Do you think that your relocation to a care home influenced your engagement in meaningful occupations?
 - If yes, how?
- Would you like to tell me anything else about being engaged in your meaningful occupations?

Appendix L: Consent form (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

Consent form

Title of the project: Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations

Name of the researcher: Tanja Krizaj, PhD student

Tel.: 031 542 887

E-pošta: tanja.krizaj@plymouth.ac.uk

Supervisor's contact details: Dr. Anne Roberts

Tel.: +44 (0) 1752 588874

E-mail: anne.roberts@plymouth.ac.uk

I confirm, that I have read and understand the information about research and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study without consequences, and without giving the reason for it.

I consent to taking part in the interview and agree for the interview to be tape-recorded.

I understand that all the information that I give will be strictly confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this study, with my identity being anonymised.

I agree to participate in the above study.

Name of the participant:

Date:

Signature:

Name of the researcher:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix M: Data analysis (IPA) example (Stage 2)

Pseudonym: Janez

Initial commentary	Transcript	Emergent Themes
<p>Personal feelings of being alone – rejecting company of co-residents.</p> <p>One month is too short to evaluate. Finding out what else to bring Being in the process of constantly going from the flat to his new home (care home) – the never ending process of relocation.</p> <p>Constantly moving his possessions – things appearing every day to bring from his flat. Is he avoiding bringing everything at once? Perceiving change vs not perceiving change (one month time).</p> <p>Being responsible about arranging his bills and his post. Does that give him a feeling of control and autonomy? Having an opportunity to consult with his son is very important for him.</p> <p>Feeling limited in a care home in terms of is every day routine – emphasizing self-care. Searching his place.</p>	<p>T: What about.... When we talked a month ago when you were still at home you told me about how you spent your days. Could you tell me more about how you spend your days here?</p> <p>R: You know, after one month it's hard to tell really. I'm practically relocating already the whole month. I miss this and that and I go to get it. I'm constantly at this relation [from residential home to his old flat]</p> <p>T: So you're actually still in the process of a relocation...</p> <p>R: Yes, still, still... I tell you, I'm constantly moving. I have this list what I have to bring now. For instance, I brought this yesterday [he shows me a few books]. I also got the mail and all that. There isn't much change in a month. Well, there is and there isn't.</p> <p>T: So, you still receive the mail at your old flat.</p> <p>R: Yes, you know I have around ten direct debits for paying the bills and I informed all suppliers and I started to get the bills here. The post really carried out his quickly. Even though there are some of them who should be informed. I just talked to my son about it and he said I should leave this be for now.</p> <p>T: What do you think changed the most in your everyday rhythm? Now in the last month.</p> <p>R: Yes, that's a good one. It limits me, you know. I didn't get used to it yet. Especially regarding the self care, you know. I'm searching myself. As I already said, I'm still relocating. When I came I put this there and other thing there, a few papers there and I constantly</p>	<p>FIRST MONTH FOR RELOCATION PICKING UP MISSING THINGS RELOCATION AS A LASTING PROCESS</p> <p>BRINGING THINGS ACCORDING TO HIS CURRENT NEEDS PERCEIVING CHANGE VS NON-CHANGE</p> <p>RESPONSIBILITY ABOUT ARRANGING HIS BILLS AND POST (FORMAL THINGS) THE IMPORTANCE OF SON'S PRESENCE</p> <p>HIS SELF-CARE ROUTINE LIMITED SEARCHING FOR HIMSELF WHILE RELOCATING CONSTANT SEARCH</p>

Initial comments	Transcript	Emergent Themes
<p>Still having feelings of relocating. Constantly searching for something.</p> <p>Feeling lost because constantly searching for something. He lost his usual morning routine – new routine emerging? Getting used to new ways as the hardest? He's talking about his morning routine before and now.</p> <p>different ways of doing things. Persuading/encouraging himself about getting used to it? Sharing a bathroom with a neighbour – awareness of having to organize between each other.</p> <p>Perceiving self as 'new' hence the one to adjust? Adjusting to neighbours ways because he was here before him. Hard to get used to new ways.</p>	<p>search for something.</p> <p>T: Aha, I understand, yes, yes.</p> <p>R: That's why I said I feel lost. I'm lost in a way that I just can't find anything. It's not going... I had a sequence for instance... I made myself breakfast in the morning, I took my medicine, then self care, you know. And so on. That's not the case now. And I have to get used to it and that's the hardest.</p> <p>T: So you still have all these things, but in a different way?</p> <p>R: Yes, in a different way, in a different way. And I have to get used to it. Especially because there are two of us [not in the same room, but they share a bathroom]. We have to organize, you know.</p> <p>T: About the bathroom...</p> <p>R: Yes.</p> <p>T: How do you manage that?</p> <p>R: Well, I'm new and he's here for a long time. I want to adjust to his way. So I have to be careful that he's the first one to use the toilet, then I go , after him. And so on, and so on. That's it. And it's really hard to get used to it.</p> <p>T: I understand...., especially since you've been alone for so long...</p>	<p>OF HIS THINGS FEELING LOST WHILE SEARCHING FOR HIS THINGS HIS USUAL MORNING ROUTINE HIS MORNING ROUTINE BEFORE AND NOW GETTING USED TO NEW WAYS</p> <p>ADJUSTING TO A DIFFERENT ROUTINE COORDINATING HIS ROUTINE WITH HIS NEW NEIGHBOUR</p> <p>PERCEIVING SELF AS 'NEW' GIVING HIS NEIGHBOUR THE ADVANTAGE AT SELF- CARE NEW WAYS AS HARD</p> <p>SELF-CARE AS PERSONAL MATTERS</p>

Appendix N: Superordinate Themes (1st interview) (Stage 1)

JANEZ 1 – SUPERORDINATE THEMES

Superordinate themes	Emergent themes
TEMPORAL ASPECT OF EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAILY ROUTINE AS 'NORMAL' • 'VISITING' HIS WIFE • DAILY ROUTINE • PASSING OF THE DAYS • LINKED 'EVENING NEWS' ROUTINE • AUTUMN AS THE END OF HIS DRIVING • VISITING ZATRNÍK AS WEEKEND OCCUPATION • WEEKLY ROUTINE • TIME PASSING • THEN AND NOW • CONSTANT ACTIVITY FOR PASSING TIME • WALKING THROUGH TIME • SETTING THE TIMEFRAME FOR ADJUSTMENT • PLANNING HIS DAYS IN ADVANCE
OLD AGE AS LOSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWARENESS OF PREVIOUS PHYSICAL CONDITION • AWARENESS OF HIS AGE IN TERMS OF SAFETY • TAKING CARE OF HIS FLAT ON HIS OWN • REDUCTION OF ACTIVITY WITH AGE • LOOSING CONTACTS WITH FRIENDS OVER THE YEARS • LOOSING FEELINGS OF HOMELINESS WITH LOOSING FRIENDS • LOOSING FRIENDS EVERYWHERE • LOOSING SOCIAL CONTACTS WITH OLD AGE • SEEING HIMSELF AS IN THE PROCESS OF LEAVING • THE VALUE OF INDEPENDENCE • BEING AWARE OF HIS CHANGED ABILITIES • A LOSS OF HIS COLLEAGUES • AWARENESS OF OLD AGE • PERCEIVING OLD AGE AS A LIMITATION • OLD AGE AS THE TIME WITH NO WISHES AND NEEDS • LOOSING HIS FREEDOM OF CHOICE • THE IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE • PERCEIVING SELF • CHANGED ABILITIES • THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING HIS DAILY RESPONSIBILITIES BY HIMSELF
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEING AT THE COTTAGE (COMMON OCCUPATION FOR HIM) • THE MEANING OF GARDENING • DRIVING AS EVERYTHING • DRIVING AS HIS FREEDOM AND CONTROL • DRIVING AS RELAXATION • THINKING AHEAD ABOUT MISSING DRIVING

<p>DRIVING TO HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIGOROUS RULES REGARDING DRIVER'S LICENCE • BEING SELF-CONFIDENT REGARDING DRIVING • VISITING HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE AS THE MOST MEANINGFUL OCCUPATION • BEING PART OF THE COMMUNITY • WORK TOGETHER WITH PLEASURE • VISITING ZATRNIK AS AN EXIT FROM BAD MOMENTS • DRIVING AS MEANS FOR VISITING ZATRNIK • DECIDING IN A MOMENT AS VALUABLE • KEEPING HIS ZATRNIK • HAVING A CAR AS INDEPENDENT • THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING HIS GARAGE
<p>THE VALUE OF FAMILY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAMILY HIKING TRIPS AS REGULAR • THE IMPORTANCE OF SONS HELP • BEING A GRANDFATHER AS AN IMPORTANT ROLE • IMPORTANCE OF GOOD RELATIONSHIPS INSIDE THE FAMILY • CO-OCCUPATIONS WITH HIS GRANDCHILDREN • THE INFLUENCE OF WIFE'S DEATH ON HIS OCCUPATIONAL DISENGAGEMENT • FAMILY BEFORE HIS OTHER ENGAGEMENTS • THE IMPORTANCE OF SON'S PRESENCE WHEN VISITING THE CARE HOME • TRANSFERRING SOME OCCUPATIONS TO YOUNGER ONES • PASSING THE KNOWLEDGE FORWARD • WEEKEND COTTAGE AS A FAMILY OCCUPATION • ZATRNIK AS CONNECTION WITH GRANDCHILDREN • GRANDCHILDREN'S ATTACHMENT TO ZATRNIK
<p>RELOCATION THOUGHTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDENTIFYING WITH OTHERS REGARDING MOVING • PREPARING THINGS FOR HIS RELOCATION • EXPECTING HEAVY CHANGES AFTER RELOCATING • ANTICIPATING AND QUESTIONING ABOUT THE IMPACT OF RELOCATION ON HIS LIFE • CARE HOMES AS WAITING ROOM FOR DEATH • PLANNING THE RELOCATION • STRUGGLING WITH THE DECISION • ADJUSTING TO CHANGE • FEAR OF CHANGE • THE INFLUENCE OF POTENTIAL RELOCATION ON HIS SLEEP • PERCEIVING LACK OF INFORMATION IN ADVANCE • NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF A CARE HOME RESIDENTS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLANNING VISITS TO HIS FLAT AFTER THE RELOCATION • FEELINGS OF BEING LIMITED AT A CARE HOME • FIRST IMPRESSION OF HIS NEW ROOM AS HORRIBLE • ACCEPTING HIS NEW LIVING CONDITIONS • REARRANGING THE ROOM
ATTACHMENT TO HOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHOOSING PARTICULAR OBJECTS FOR RELOCATION • THE MEANING OF HIS PALM TREE • LEAVING SOME OF HIS THINGS FOR LATER • THE MEANING OF 'HIS HOME' • SLOVENIAN MOUNTAINS • FEELING HEALTHY WHILE BEING THERE • EXPERIENCE OF HEALTH IMPROVEMENT • BEING AT HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE AS ENCOURAGEMENT • 'LAZING AROUND' AS MEANINGFUL • HIS ENTHUSIASM AND JOY ABOUT HIS WEEKEND PLACE • BEING MODEST REGARDING HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE • ENJOYING 'BEING' IN THE SURROUNDINGS OF HIS COTTAGE • BEING PROUD ABOUT THE BEGINNINGS • GOOD MEMORIES REGARDING THE COTTAGE • POTTERING AROUND THE HOUSE

Appendix O: Superordinate Themes (2nd interview) (Stage 2)

JANEZ 2 – SUPERORDINATE THEMES

Superordinate themes	Emergent themes
BALANCING BETWEEN KEEPING AND ADJUSTING HIS WAYS OF DOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIS SELF-CARE ROUTINE LIMITED • SEARCHING FOR HIMSELF WHILE RELOCATING • CONSTANT SEARCH FOR THINGS • HIS USUAL MORNING ROUTINE • THE CHANGE OF HIS MORNING ROUTINE • ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF ADJUSTMENT • COORDINATING HIS ROUTINE WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR • GIVING HIS NEIGHBOUR THE ADVANTAGE AT SELF-CARE • NEW WAYS AS HARD • THE MEANING OF TIME WITH ADJUSTMENT • HIS INDIVIDUAL MORNING EXERCISE • HIS MORNING EXERCISE AS STRENGTH • VISITING HIS WIFE'S GRAVE AS TUESDAY OCCUPATION • SPECIAL ROUTINE OF ARRANGING THE GRAVE • MISSING SHOPPING • WINDOW SHOPPING AS A REPLACEMENT • KEEPING THINGS AS THEY WERE • RELOCATION AS CHANGING THE WAY OF LIFE
DRIVING TO HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE AS A FORM OF ESCAPISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE AS A MEANS FOR REVIVAL • COMING BACK FROM ZATRNİK • HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE AS CERTAINTY • HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE AS BEAUTIFUL PLEASURE • POTTERING AROUND HIS COTTAGE • ANTICIPATING THE END OF HIS DRIVING • AUTUMN AS THE END OF HIS DRIVING • DRIVING AS HIS LIFELONG OCCUPATION • THE INCONVENIENCE OF PAYING FOR THE GARAGE • SEARCHING SOLUTIONS FOR PARKING THE CAR NEARBY • FEELING DESPERATE WHILE TRYING TO FIND A SOLUTION FOR HIS PARKING • THE END OF DRIVING AS 'STOPPING' • THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY VISITING THE COTTAGE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERCEIVING SELF AS 'NEW' • BEING IN THE SAME BOAT • GENERALISING RESIDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL NEEDS • HIS PERCEPTION OF GROUP ACTIVITY • IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCING HIM TO OTHER RESIDENTS

PERCEIVING SELF VERSUS OTHER RESIDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVOIDING ENGAGEMENT IN GROUP ACTIVITIES • PERCEIVING GROUP EXERCISES AS TOO EASY FOR HIM • GROUP EXERCISES AS SOMETHING FOR THE FUTURE • POSTPONING TALKING TO THE THERAPIST ABOUT HIS DISENGAGEMENT • PERCEIVING SELF
PERCEIVING A CARE HOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROOM AS A SOLITARY CONFINEMENT • GENERAL SATISFACTION VS. PERSONAL SATISFACTION • SPACE LIMITATION IN A CARE HOME • NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION • PERCEIVING ROOM AS A CHANGE • PERCEIVING A CARE HOME 'THEN' AND 'NOW' • EXPECTATIONS VS. REALITY
RELOCATION AS AN EMOTIONAL PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEELING LONELY • QUESTIONING PAST AND FUTURE • FEELING LOST • FEELING 'ALONE' EVERYWHERE • FIRST MONTH FOR RELOCATION • RELOCATION AS ON-GOING PROCESS • PERCEIVING CHANGE VS. NON-CHANGE • AWARENESS OF THE NECESSITY TO END THE RELOCATION • HAVING EVERYTHING VS. NOT HAVING IT HERE • LESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITING ZATRIK BECAUSE OF THE RELOCATING PROCESS • THINKING AS DISTURBANCE OF HIS SLEEPING • THE INFLUENCE OF THINKING • PERCEIVING MISSING AS BEING SPOILED
FAMILY AS HIS CERTAINTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE IMPORTANCE OF SON'S HELP • THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY DEALING WITH HIS THINGS • CHILDREN'S HELP REGARDING DRIVING • PERCEIVING SELF AS A BURDEN WHEN NOT DRIVING ANYMORE • THE MEANING OF GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILDREN • THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING INCLUDED IN FAMILY EVENTS • FAMILY AS HIS CERTAINTY • GOOD 'FAMILY NAME' AS A VALUE (REPUTATION) • FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AS THE SAME

Appendix P: Superordinate themes (3rd interview) (Stage 2)

JANEZ 3 – SUPERORDINATE THEMES

Superordinate themes	Emergent themes
ADJUSTING HIS ENGAGEMENT IN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE MEANING OF GOING AROUND THE SHOPS • THE PROCESS OF ADJUSTMENT AS NEVER ENDING • MEMORIES OF PAST WORK AS AN OBSTACLE FOR ADJUSTMENT • COMPARING WITH OTHERS REGARDING ADJUSTMENT • REPLACING DRIVING WITH WALKING • WALKING AS A NEW DAILY ROUTINE • GOING TO SHOPPING MALLS AS MEANINGFUL • DISENGAGEMENT FROM SOME OF THE PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS • SHARING A BATHROOM AS AN ISSUE • ADJUSTING TO HIS NEIGHBOUR'S ROUTINE • DISENGAGEMENT FROM SOME OCCUPATIONS • THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE • REPLACING DRIVING WITH A BUS • SEARCHING THE POSSIBILITY OF VISITING SHOPPING MALLS
HAVING A ROUTINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADJUSTING HIS TIME • TIME PASSING IN THE LIGHT OF DAILY OCCUPATIONS • EARLY RISING • BEING INFORMED • THE MEANING OF THE FIRST SLEEP • PERCEIVING CHANGE OF DAILY ROUTINE • TIME PASSING QUICKLY AS HELPFUL • HIS MORNING EXERCISE • LISTENING TO HIS BODY
WEEKEND COTTAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VISITING THE COTTAGE ONLY BECAUSE OF SNOW • BEING PROUD OF HIS COTTAGE • SPENDING LONGER TIME AT ZATRNIK • VISITING ZATRNIK AS SOMETHING HE DESERVES • FEELING HEALTHY WHEN BEING AT ZATRNIK • GOING TO ZATRNIK AS MOST MEANINGFUL • HAVING FEELINGS OF ENJOYMENT AGAIN • THE MEANING OF SPENDING TIME WITH NEIGHBOURS • SPENDING HOLIDAYS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS • NATIONAL SONGS AS MEANINGFUL • ZATRNIK AS A PLACE OF WELL-BEING FOR HIM • MISSING DRIVING IN RELATION TO

	<p>ZATRNIK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ZATRNIK AS A RUNAWAY FROM BOREDOM • SEARCHING FOR CONSOLATION
THE VALUE OF FAMILY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY AT HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE • NOT BURDENING HIS FAMILY AS A COMFORT • THE IMPORTANCE OF SON'S HELP WITH KEEPING HIS WEEKLY OCCUPATIONS • THINKING ABOUT PASSING ON THE FLAT TO HIS CHILDREN • THE MEANING OF MAKING GRANDSON HAPPY • THE MEANING OF 'GIVING' TO HIS FAMILY • THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN FAMILY • THE MEANING OF RESPECTING HIS OPINION • TIME FLYING WHEN TALKING TO HIS FAMILY
SOCIALISING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEING THOUGHTFUL TOWARDS OTHER RESIDENTS • PERCEIVING NEIGHBOUR AS ANTISOCIAL • THE MEANING OF SOCIALISING AT MEALS • ENJOYING NEW LADY FRIENDS • SHOWING AFFECTION TO THE LADIES AT HIS TABLE • CREATING A PLEASANT ATMOSPHERE (MAKING GOOD IMPRESSION) • BEING THOUGHTFUL AS HIS HABIT • PERCEIVING ONE LADY AS SPECIAL • BEING IN A CARE HOME IN YOUR HOME TOWN • THE IMPORTANCE OF NEIGHBOURS' OPINION • MEETING OTHERS AS SOMETHING ALONG THE WAY
MISSING DRIVING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRIVING AS A SOLUTION FOR FEELING ALONE • DETERMINATION ABOUT STOPPING DRIVING • NOT BEING ABLE TO DRIVE AS A CHANGE • DRIVING A CAR AS HIS EVERYDAY • MISSING DRIVING
HAVING A CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS PREFERENCE • REJECTING ENGAGEMENT IN GROUP CELEBRATIONS IN A CARE HOME • HAVING A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS GROUP ACTIVITIES IN A CARE HOME • BEING SELECTIVE, HAVING A CHOICE • HAVING HIS WAY • DOING WHAT SUITS HIM
PERCEIVING A CARE HOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERCEIVING OTHER RESIDENTS • ENDING THE PROCESS OF RELOCATION • ALONE EVERYWHERE • PERCEIVING HIS ROOM AS A SOLITARY

	<p>CONFINEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERCEIVING CARE HOME AS A WAITING ROOM FOR DEATH • THE VALUE OF 24 HOUR HELP AS THE ONLY BENEFIT • THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING INDEPENDENT • PERCEIVING THE AREA AS TERRIBLE • WALKING THE SAME PATHS ALL THE TIME
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Appendix R: Superordinate and Master themes for 1 participant (across all 3 interviews - longitudinal)

JANEZ - A GRID OF SUPERORDINATE AND MASTER THEMES

Superordinate themes 1 st interview	Superordinate themes 2 nd interview	Superordinate themes 3 rd interview	Master Themes
TEMPORAL ASPECT (routine...)	BALANCING BETWEEN 'KEEPING' AND 'ADJUSTING' HIS WAYS OF DOING	ADJUSTING HIS ENGAGEMENT IN OCCUPATIONS	'KEEPING' VERSUS 'ADJUSTING' HIS DOING
A SENSE OF LOSS		HAVING A ROUTINE	
'DRIVING' TO 'HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE'	'DRIVING' TO 'HIS WEEKEND COTTAGE'	WEEKEND COTTAGE AS A PLACE OF REVIVAL	INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF OCCUPATIONS
THE VALUE OF FAMILY	PERCEIVING SELF VERSUS OTHER RESIDENTS	THE VALUE OF FAMILY	SOCIAL ASPECT OF THE TRANSITION INTO A CARE HOME
RELOCATION THOUGHTS	PERCEIVING A CARE HOME	SOCIALISING	
ATTACHMENT	RELOCATION AS AN EMOTIONAL PROCESS	MISSING DRIVING	SOLITARY CONFINEMENT
	FAMILY AS HIS CERTAINTY	HAVING A CHOICE	
		PERCEIVING A CARE HOME	

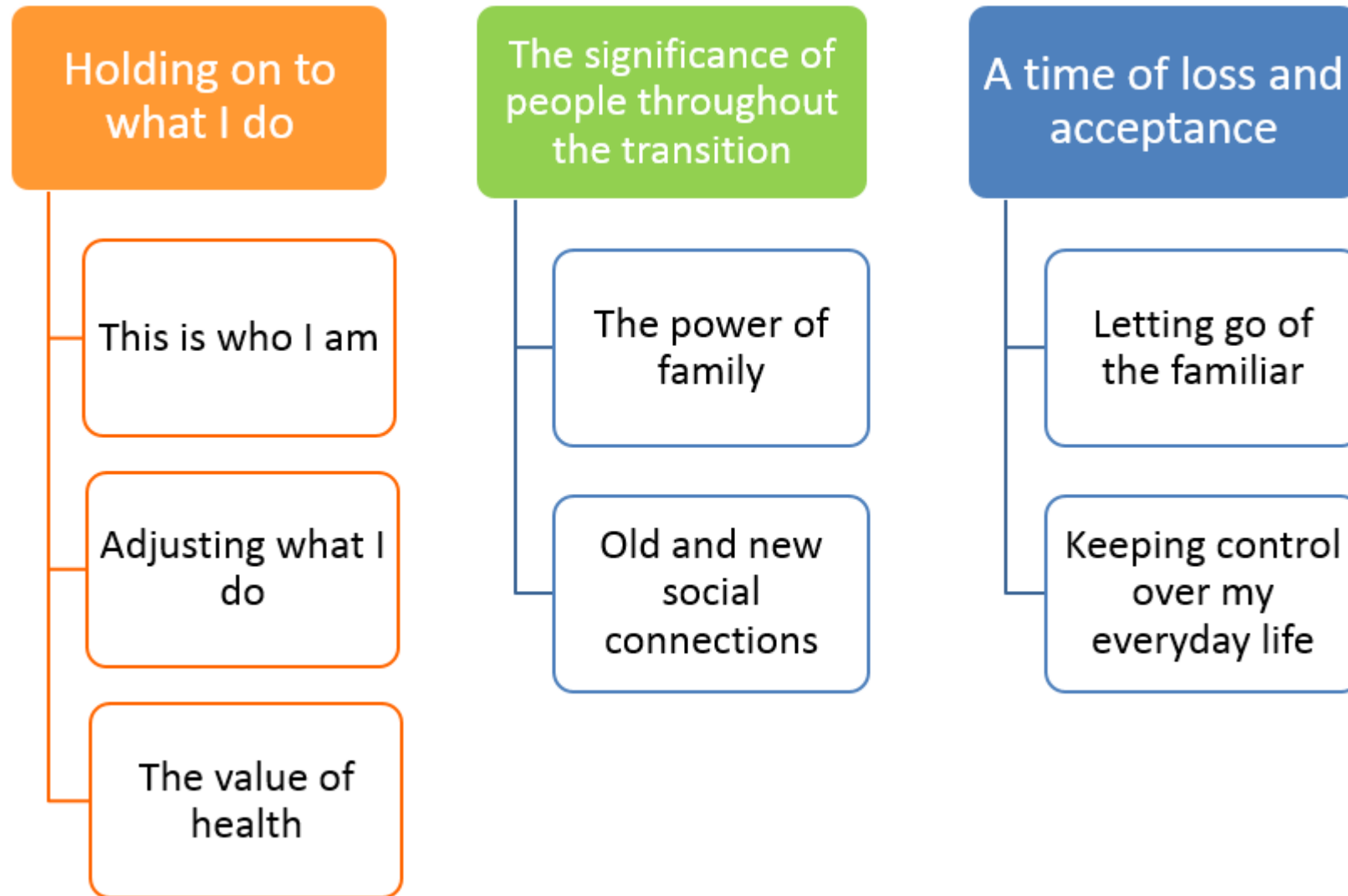
Appendix S: Master themes for each participant (Stage 2)

JANEZ Driver	DORA Social Advocate	BOR Professional identity	JELKA Farmer's dough	MIHA Walking	ELZA Thinker
KEEPING/ADJUSTING HIS DOING	LACK OF SENSE OF HOME	HIS WORK IS HIS LIFE	KEEPING A SENSE OF PRODUCTIVITY	FACING LIFE CHALLENGES BY HAVING FAITH	HEALTH ISSUES RESTRICTING HER EVERYDAY LIFE
INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF OCCUPATIONS	SOCIAL ADVOCATE ROLE	A STRONG SENSE OF FAMILY	SOMETHING FOR MY SOUL	INDEPENDENCE THROUGH HIS WALKS	A SENSE OF HOME THROUGH FAMILY
ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSITION THROUGH PEOPLE	HER HEALTH IS HER RESPONSIBILITY	JUGGLING HIS MOSAIC OF DOING	SENSE OF SECURITY THROUGH CONTROLLING THE RELOCATION	HELPERS' ROLE IN HIS LIFE	A DEEP THINKER
SOLITARY CONFINEMENT	HER RELOCATING DECISIONS INFLUENCED BY SOCIAL INTERACTIONS	A TIME OF DETACHMENT VERSUS ATTACHMENT	ACCEPTING THE COMPLEXITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS		ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSITION INTO AN INSTITUTION

Legend (looking across six cases for Overarching Themes):

Holding On to What I Do The Significance of People Throughout the Transition A Time of Loss and Acceptance

Appendix T: Overarching themes (Stage 2 – longitudinal)



Appendix U: Data analysis (Thematic Analysis) example (Stage 3)

FIELD NOTES (English) - OBSERVATIONS CARE HOME Slovenia

Descriptive notes	Reflective notes	Coding
<p>08/04/2014 – 10:30am</p> <p>A group of residents get together once a week for a so called 'TAI CHI' lesson which is led by a man volunteer, named Joe. When I step into the room the group is already ready to begin and occupational therapist (who's with me) introduces me to the group. I decided to join them... and take some notes in between. The room is a small dining room on the 2nd floor where some of the residents have their meals as well. It's very modern since it has just been renovated. It is without the door and when you step in there's a small kitchen on the right sight... and on the left the space opens into a large dining room with a table and chairs. The tables were moved away for the purpose of this activity.</p> <p>There are 7 residents participating (all ladies) + me all sitting in the chairs ready to start. A lady next to me leans over to me and says: ' This exercise is no good for me... and I'm not really able to do it so slowly as he does'</p> <p>Joe starts with his session...giving instructions about breathing and movements... I can see he's trying to include them as much as possible, even though some of them are not really able to follow him. A lady in front of me in a wheelchair is not able to follow all of the movements... so she's only doing what she can.</p> <p>Another lady has her sweater hanging on the back of her chair... and it falls on the floor in the middle of the session. She starts looking around...and tries to pick it up... but Joe comes, takes the sweater and takes it away... he says (smiling): I'll take this ...so it won't bother you anymore. I really like this sweater; I'll probably take it home. The lady seemed confused and she smiled back.</p> <p>During the session I can see some of them really immersed, following Joe's guidance... but on the other hand some of them were looking around and experiencing this more as a morning exercise... not so much as a TAI CHI... the way Joe would want them to.</p> <p>He concluded by telling them to use visualisation – just to imagine nice places where they could relax.</p> <p>The lady on my left side really tries to relax... and it can be seen how much she's enjoying.</p>	<p>I thought that the room was maybe too modern, very nicely designed but I was wondering if it really feels like home.</p> <p>I could see that most of the residents were engaging in this particular activity to maintain their physical activity and not with the purpose of spiritual engagement as Joe would want them to. He was really deeply experiencing the activity himself therefore not really noticing the level of engagement by their participants. Sometimes I felt his instructions are too complicated also because he was using 'TAI CHI' terminology... so the residents did not fully understand what he meant. He was being very meditative and he really wanted them to be in the same state, but I think he was maybe expecting too much from them.</p> <p>Example: when telling them to use visualisation some of them didn't</p>	<p>Tai chi once/per week (weekly routine)</p> <p>The role of volunteers (running group activities)</p> <p>Care home physical environment (renovation of the care home)</p> <p>Different abilities between different residents</p> <p>Not considering individual needs?</p> <p>Adjusting occupational performance (individual needs)</p> <p>Using humour when interacting with the residents</p> <p>Enjoying the group activity</p> <p>Physical exercise as important (looking after their health?)</p> <p>Activity instructions</p>

<p>In the corridor next by (since there's no door) to members of healthcare staff are talking to each other and they're moving all these trolleys around which is not the best since the group is trying to 'meditate'.</p> <p>We can also hear some music coming out from one of the rooms, physiotherapist coming down the corridor with a lady teaching her how to use the walker, telephone ringing in the distance etc.....</p> <p>11:45am (same day)</p> <p>I'm sitting outside the building at the table. There is a small park right outside the care home with tables and chairs and some benches for the residents to be able to sit outside. Also... since they have a bar inside, they can have a cup of coffee or a drink or whatever.</p> <p>I'm surrounded with residents sitting at the tables, chatting to each other – this is the time right before lunch starts.</p> <p>On my left hand side there is a lady sitting at the table alone. She has coffee in front of her and a book in her hands. Her head rests in her hand and she's sleeping. The car nearby wakes her up and she looks towards me. She smiles (because she knows who I am), she puts her glasses on and continues with reading.</p> <p>At the next table there are 3 residents and a younger lady who is apparently a visitor.</p> <p>The park around the home really offers the residents to spend time outdoors, just talking with each other or spending time with their families and friends when they come to visit. In the middle of the park there's a water fountain.</p> <p>On my right hand side there's another lady sitting quietly and just looking around, enjoying the moment.</p> <p>In the distance right next to the entrance there are two residents chatting with each other... both using their walkers to sit down. They're having this very deep, lovely conversation – at least that is how it looks like from the distance.</p> <p>I decide to approach the lady who's reading a book.</p> <p>The resident who just came out of the home looks at her watch (probably because she's waiting for lunchtime). She approaches the lady who sits on my right hand</p>	<p>have any idea what that means.</p> <p>I was thinking that having a room for group activities without the door was probably not such a good idea since there was a lot of noise going on in the corridor which was disturbing for the group.</p> <p>I wasn't really sure why the lady left... but I think she had another engagement and the noise reminded her of that maybe.</p> <p>I was wondering if this was the most appropriate activity for this room and these particular residents. The session as of course voluntary but I could see that the purpose of the session was quite different from the residents' experiences. My thinking was that they really enjoyed the physical part of the activity but not so much the meditative part because they didn't really understand it that much.</p>	<p>Enjoying the group activity</p> <p>Noisy environment for meditation (too many different inputs)</p> <p>Care home outdoor surrounding (offering the opportunity to sit outside and socialise)</p> <p>Residents chatting to each other Waiting for lunch Spending time outdoors (being – doing) Restorative occupations</p> <p>Spending time with visitors</p> <p>Park nearby Care home surrounding areas Restorative environment?</p> <p>Passing time</p> <p>The value of chatting/conversation</p> <p>Importance of using walking aids</p>
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Appendix V: Theme development (codes and themes) (Stage 3)

Theme development – FIELD NOTES (Stage 3)

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
<p>MAINTAINING AND LOSING THE SENSE OF SELF AND HOME</p>	<p>THE ROLE OF ROUTINE</p>	<p> Organisation of meals – 8 Meal routine – 9, 196, 350, 351, 443, 892 Two rounds for meals – 15, 217, 220, 240, 782, 925 Waiting list for rooms – 22 Weekly group activities – 36 Daily routine of visiting the bar – 72, 84 Coffee before breakfast as daily routine – 88 Afternoon as time for visitors – 89 Visitors as part of care home daily routine – 105 Weekly tai chi session – 118 Regular group activities – 118, 291 Restricted by meal times – 259 Coffee after lunch as routine – 267 Collecting the newspaper as daily routine – 269 Memory group – 292 Weekend as time for visitors – 298 Playing board games – 307 Importance of following game rules – 318 Planning the day 362 Arts and crafts workshops as weekly routine – 364, 372, 864 Wednesday a day for singing - 371 Monthly birthday celebrations – 379, 517, 566 End-of-year-celebrations – 419 Regular attendance – 429, 471 Time structure – 478 Certain food at certain days – 673 Time after dinner as chatting time – 684-687 Watching evening (7 o' clock) news – 691 Evening visitors – 704 Care home closing hour – 708, 134a Residents' evening routine – 714-719 Early morning routine – 775 Weekend as time for visits – 4a </p>

		<p>Monthly music events – 82a</p> <p>Regular weekly exercise – 108a, 827</p> <p>Time before dinner as socialising – 118a</p> <p>Being familiar with exercises – 850</p> <p>Following the same exercise protocol as important – 851</p> <p>Occupying same spaces every time – 869, 963</p> <p>Making coffee as a routine alongside arts and crafts – 873</p> <p>Being ‘on time’ – 959</p> <p>Preference of staying in a care home for holidays – 1087</p> <p>The value of care home routine – 1090</p> <p>Going home as tiring – 1094</p> <p>Playing chess as regular weekly activity – 1123</p> <p>Playing cards as regular activity – 1131</p> <p>Time after lunch – 942</p> <p>Coffee after lunch – 945</p> <p>Playing chess outside of allocated time – 1128</p>
	<p>THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTONOMY</p>	<p>Where to have your meal – 10</p> <p>Organisation of rooms according to residents’ needs – 24</p> <p>The freedom of visits – 80</p> <p>Different needs between residents – 124, 138, 147, 292</p> <p>Different abilities – 134, 136, 160, 171, 208, 278, 392, 1049</p> <p>Different occupational needs – 205</p> <p>Importance of being different from others – 214</p> <p>Having control over own time – 233, 260</p> <p>Adjusting time after relocation – 234</p> <p>The value of independent decision for relocation – 235, 427</p> <p>Considering individual wishes with regards to meal time- 242</p> <p>Control over going out – 254</p> <p>Differences between residents in terms of visits – 301</p> <p>Losing previous role – 327</p> <p>Adjusting occupational performance – 386</p> <p>Expressing opinion – 389, 457</p> <p>Residents’ suggestions – 463, 502</p> <p>The possibility of ironing in the common room – 497</p> <p>Individual wishes – 507, 512</p> <p>Some residents being negative about special occasions – 632</p> <p>Restrictions on ordering alcoholic drinks – 710</p> <p>Going to events outside care home – 720</p> <p>Recording ‘going out in the evening’ as annoying – 731</p>

		<p> Lady waiting in front of entrance when coming back in the evening – 744-749 Daughter's help – 750 Lack of privacy – 779 Health issues of individual residents – 11a Care home TV operator as restricting – 73a Worried about appearance – 95a The advantage of having meals in the dining room – 98a Keeping the room locked – 104a Collecting the newspaper by themselves – 791 Restrictions to newspaper collection Removing the coffee machine as disturbing – 816 Short breakfast time – 820 Individual residents' needs – 849 Having a choice about food – 934 Individual resident's wishes about food – 980 Having a choice where to sit in the dining room – 1015 Differences in commitment between residents – 1040, 1054 Their way of colouring Easter eggs – 1119 Wanting to tell their unique story – 1138 Early application for care home – 1149 The value of single rooms – 441 Restricted time for watching TV together – 131a Residents' wishes for sitting outdoors after 9pm – 135a Individual stories – 69a Not being able to engage in previous activities – 66a </p>
		<p> Spending time in the nursing home surroundings – 6, 172, 175, 182, 183, 223-230, Not enough room in the dining room – 9, 221 Unsatisfied with the room – 17 Dementia ward – 28 Arranging the rooms as their home – 35 Benches to spend time outdoors – 62 Bar in the lounge area – 65, 88, 289 Care home physical environment – 64, 281, 285 Parrot in the lounge – 94, 282, 886 Noisy environment for meditation – 140 Appropriate physical environment - 144 Nearby park – 188 Care home surrounding areas – 191 Restorative environment – 192 </p>

	<p>CARE HOME PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>Nearby church – 207 Care home location as important – 251 City centre as offering opportunities – 253 Not enough room in rooms – 255 The value of renovating care home surroundings – 265 Care home environment enabling people hanging out together – 286 Care home renovation – 355 Going to city centre – 424 The value of walking aids – 426 Joining reception with the bar – 498 Red carnation – 600 Environment arrangements for celebration – 599 Chapel available for religious practice – 767 Spending time in a park – 12a Care home outdoor environment for sitting around – 22a Particular TV channels – 72a Lounge TV ‘on’ on Sunday – 783 Tables outside as opportunity for socialising – 812 Busy lifts between meals – 823 Sitting outside a care home – 862 Noise from the kitchen during lunch – 950 Arranging the room for choir practice – 1022</p>
	<p>THE ROLE OF STAFF</p>	<p>The role of animator – 38, 43, 373, 878, 125 Encouraging socialising among the residents – 39 Staff’s attitude towards the residents – 59 Being approached like children – 59 Wheelchair users parked in the lounge – 115 Staff using humour – 132, 349, 395, 922 Staff changing hour – 108 Waiting lists for being admitted – 236 Attachment to certain staff members – 294 OT running the group – 315 Animator’s approach – 374, 445 Sharing rooms as cruel – 439 Restrictions due to residents’ safety – 493 The role of staff with residents’ socialising – 651 Staff rushing – 659 Time constraints – 662 More dependant residents going to bed early – 697</p>

		<p>Evening staff's role when going out – 708</p> <p>Staff-residents interactions – 724</p> <p>Staff doing night 'checking in' on residents – 753</p> <p>Night calls as predictable – 761</p> <p>The importance of residents' safety – 763</p> <p>Pastoral support available – 765</p> <p>The role of volunteers – 28a</p> <p>Some residents being perceived as children – 803</p> <p>Not aware of all possibilities – 808</p>
	SENSE OF HOME	<p>Feeling abandoned – 638</p> <p>Old age as suffer – 641, 649</p> <p>Waiting for death – 647, 107a</p> <p>Care home taking the soul – 31</p> <p>The influence of institution on everyday life – 32</p> <p>A sense of home – 35</p> <p>A room as home – 431, 694, 876</p> <p>The importance of accepting a care home as your home – 674</p> <p>Busy Saturday afternoon – 2a</p> <p>Sunday atmosphere as more relaxed – 784</p> <p>The difference between weekend and weekday atmosphere – 860</p> <p>Keeping the same room during your stay – 476</p> <p>Influence of residents with dementia on others – 53, 1004</p>
		<p>Watching TV – 92</p> <p>Observing the weather – 105</p> <p>Spending time by observing the surroundings – 110</p> <p>Residents being happy with the activity – 167</p> <p>Having coffee in combination with other activities – 174</p> <p>'being' outdoors – 180</p> <p>Listening to particular radio stations – 203</p> <p>Looking after health – 211, 936, 973</p> <p>Being able to peacefully spend time – 246</p> <p>Exercises for health – 321, 325</p> <p>Being passionate about the group activity – 342</p> <p>The value of music – 348, 448</p> <p>Holiday products – 368</p> <p>The role of a choir at birthday celebrations – 379</p> <p>The value of health – 416, 428</p> <p>Feeling lazy – 421</p> <p>Feeling responsible towards final products – 437</p>

<p>THE IMPORTANCE OF OCCUPATION</p>	<p>ENJOYABLE OCCUPATIONS</p>	<p> Past products – 468 Physical exercise – 504, 519 Singing as part of the group – 528 Colouring Easter eggs – 537, 550, 1074 Traditional activities – 538 Intellectual activities of some residents – 558 Performance dress-up agreement – 567 Choir practice before performance – 570 Excitement before the performance – 573 Slovenian national songs – 575, 620 The value of song selection – 575, 607, 1048 The importance of ‘final practice’ (‘generalka’) – 580 Performance schedule – 581 Planning the performance – 597 Anticipation of particular songs – 615 Residents being nostalgic – 618 Enjoying the celebration – 622-626 Birthday celebration as an opportunity to dress-up – 627 Work as a value – 642 Losing productivity roles – 644 The value of particular activities – 679 Less pain through meaningful occupation – 709 The value of relatives when the residents dying – 764 Going home for the weekend – 5a More residents going home for holidays – 8a Animal restrictions – 16a Anticipation of family visitors – 19a Residents reflecting on their life – 32a Socialising with family (intergenerational) – 44a, 55a The value of family visits – 44a-49a, 110a-117a Visitors being friendly with residents – 52a The value of reading – 53a Triggers of meanings – 63a A mass at Easter – 836 Celebrating national freedom day – 1027 Coordinating time for egg colouring – 1037 The value of partisan songs – 1052 Easter feast as a habit – 1107 Some residents helping at dementia ward – 1118 Being able to keep particular activities – 1148 </p>
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		<p>The value of conversation – 231, 280, 24a, 1142 Reminiscence (sharing stories from the past) – 338, 413, 403, 1008, 1059, 400 Emotional responses – 328, 619 The role of individual residents – 583, 616, 1062 Meeting friends outside care home – 250, 1153</p>
	<p>SOCIAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN RESIDENTS</p>	<p>Residents' humour – 4, 197, 322, 882 Residents sharing their experience – 49, 410 Finding likeminded residents – 55 The value of quality conversation – 56 Conversation over a cup of coffee as spending time – 68 Meals as important topic – 77, 101, 213 Talking about food – 79 Complaining about food – 79 Chatting with each other – 184, 458 Comparing with other care homes – 206 The role of the bar/reception – 271 Engaging in activities together – 275 Comparing with other residents – 302 Individual residents' contribution to group activities – 305, 341, 577, 81a Being interested in other residents – 313 Sharing individual stories – 326 Group adjusting to individual members – 330 Working together – 334 Allocation of work among residents – 366, 376, 553 Gender differences – 370, 880, 884, 1070 Group activities as women activities – 370, 467 Residents helping each other – 381 Working together towards a shared goal – 383, 433-436, 452, 591 Residents being critical between each other – 391, 414 Complimenting each other – 454, 683 Having advantage if you arrived earlier – 454 Gender roles – 465, 1070 Chat groups on different floors – 480-486 Residents influencing each other – 511 Standing up for each other – 525 Residents being protective to each other – 531, 547 Sharing instructions about Easter eggs – 544 Different intellectual levels – 562 Lack of likeminded people – 564</p>

		<p>Being responsible towards the performance – 572, 590</p> <p>Sharing issues to each other – 654</p> <p>Residents having opinions about each other – 672</p> <p>Residents helping each other – 682, 40a, 903, 904, 920, 1013</p> <p>Watching TV together – 700</p> <p>Evening socialising as rare – 733</p> <p>Perceptions of each other – 77a</p> <p>The value of gender mix – 85a</p> <p>Being thoughtful towards women – 93a</p> <p>Dining room as socialising place – 102a</p> <p>Being competitive – 846</p> <p>Socialising over lunch – 912, 983</p> <p>Talking about food – 914</p> <p>Talking about health issues – 915</p> <p>Being polite to each other – 958</p> <p>Socialising on individual floors – 990</p> <p>Collecting money for coffee and biscuits – 993</p> <p>Women chess players needed – 1126</p> <p>Friendships – 1141</p> <p>Some residents being critical about care home choir – 1158 – 1161</p> <p>Differences between residents in terms of singing talent – 1162</p> <p>Lack of interest among some residents – 541</p> <p>Playing harmonica as man's role – 554</p>
	"FILLING TIME" OCCUPATIONS	<p>Noisy periods of time in the day – 108</p> <p>Waiting for lunch – 173</p> <p>Time passing by quickly – 244, 430, 1135</p> <p>Weekends as less active – 295</p> <p>Old age as having time – 397</p> <p>Waiting for dinner – 634-637</p> <p>Not having anything to do – 643</p> <p>Waiting for good weather – 646</p> <p>People at floors being lonely – 657</p> <p>Less company on floors – 658</p> <p>Occupying time – 676</p> <p>Evening as 'nothing to do' – 139a</p> <p>Waiting for breakfast – 780</p> <p>Watching the time passing by – 114</p> <p>Dealing with boredom – 91a</p> <p>Staring through the window – 99</p>

Appendix W: Back-translations example (into Slovenian language)

KRISTINA	PETER	JERA	TONE	ROZI	ROBERT	META	MITJA	LIDIJA	LEON
Umisлити vsakodnevno rutino	Pomembnost kupnih potovanj	Samostojna hoja	Prva in druga smiselna okupacija	Smisel kmetovanja	Smisel dejstva, da je kirurg	Cvetje in glasba	Pomen fitnesa	Pomen vrtnarjenja	Šport kot življenjska okupacija
Prilagodite v okupacijskih obveznostih /	Spreminjanje samega sebe	Raznolikost dni	Prilagodite v okupacijskih obveznostih njegovim	Vsakodnevni kmečki običaji	Pomembni posamezniki	Ohranjanje vsakodnevnih ritualov / navad	Okupacije odvisne od časa in kraja	Vloga drugih pri njenih okupacijskih obveznostih	V čem resnično uživa
Kulturne okupacije skozi njeno celo življenje	Pomembnost družine	Okupacije za socializiranje	Pomen nadaljnega razvoja / učenja	Družina kot zlato	Zdravje preko fizične aktivnosti	Pomembnost običajnih socialnih okupacij	Razvoj skozi okupacije	Moj dom	Imeti uradno vlogo
Vzdrževanje stikov z drugimi ljudmi	Vsakodnevne obveznosti	Obvezne okupacije	Imeti obveznosti	Prosti trenutki	Pomembnost časa z okupacijami	Pomen dela	Vsakodnevna rutina	Vsak dan je pomemben	Določeni dnevi za določene okupacije
Pomembnost ohranitve zdravja	Učenje skozi kulturo	Pomen doma	Preživljanje časa z drugimi	Pomen doma		Prilagodite v okupacijskih	Vloga drugih ljudi pri njegovih	Okupacije za zdravje	Vloga drugih pri njegovih okupacijah
Odločnost skozi izkušnje	Fotografija kot njegov hobi	Povezave z njeno družino				Pomen družinskih odnosov	Imeti vlogo	Pomen dela	
Uživanje doma	Vloga drugih ljudi	Prilagodite v okupacij njenemu zdravstvenemu stanju				Okolica njenega doma		Prilagajanje njenih okupacijskih obveznosti	

Appendix W continued: Independent coding example (by a 2nd bilingual person)

INITIAL COMMENTS	TRANSCRIPT (RICHARD – 1 month after the relocation) <i>How does the process of relocation into a residential care home influence Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations?</i>	EMERGENT THEMES
<p><i>Besede »To me ovira,... iščem se,« izražajo skrb</i></p> <p>Ne gre, ne gre. Imel sem svoj zaporedje, recimo ne. Zajtrk sm si zjutrej naredu, pa zdravila vzel, pa osebna higiena, a ne. In tko naprej. Zdej tega ni a ne... jest sm nov, on je pa že dl časa recimo tukej a ne. In se želim prilagajat njegovemu načinu a ne.</p> <p><u>>Izguba rutine in navad:</u> <u>>Izguba identitete</u> <u>>prilagajanje</u></p> <p><i>Besede »se bom mogu« izražajo potrebo/zahtevo/pricakovanje</i></p> <p>Sm govoru z eno gospod dol k skupej zajtrkujeva, pa skupej sva na kosilu, ne. Ona je že 5 let tukej. Je čist domača, a ne. Sej prav je mela podobne težave kot jih imam jest zdejele, a ne.</p> <p><u>>Navezovanje kontaktov – skupne aktivnosti</u></p>	<p>T: No, ampak recimo kaj mislte, da se vam je v tem dnevnem ritmu najbl spremenil? Zdej, v tem mecu, recimo.</p> <p>M: Koko</p> <p>T: V tem vsakodnevnem ritmu, kaj se vam je najbl spremenil?</p> <p>M: Ja, to je pa dobro, ja. To me ovira, veste. Do tega se nisem še privadu. Kar se tiče osebne higiene, pa sploh. Iščem se, ne. Kot sm reku sm še v fazi selitve, ampak kokr sm pršov, sm razmetov tole sm vrgu, tele stvari sm, to tja, nekej papirjev tja in kar naprej iščem.</p> <p>T: Aha, seveda, ja, ja</p> <p>M: Ne, mislm zato sm reku sm zgubljen, ne. Zgubljen v tem smislu, da enostavno se ne najdem. Ne gre, ne gre. Imel sem svoj zaporedje, recimo ne. Zajtrk sm si zjutrej naredu, pa zdravila vzel, pa osebna higiena, a ne. In tko naprej. Zdej tega ni a ne. Temu se morm privajat in to je najtežje, ne.</p> <p>T: To se prav zdej je to drgač, še vedno vse to mate, ampak na drug način.</p> <p>M: Na drug način, na drug način, ja. In temu se je treba prvadit. Posebn še ker sva dva, a ne. Se je treba nekak razporedit a ne.</p> <p>T: Aha kar se tiče uporabe kopalnice mislte.</p> <p>M: Ja, ja</p> <p>T: Kako pa pol to rešujete recimo.</p> <p>M: Ha, ja tko jest sm nov, on je pa že dl časa recimo tukej a ne. In se želim prilagajat njegovemu načinu a ne.</p> <p>T: Mh</p>	<p><u>Adaptacija</u></p> <p><u>Izguba rutine in navad</u> <u>zguba identitete</u></p> <p><u>iskanje socialnih kontaktov za skupne aktivnosti</u></p>

Appendix X: Ethics documents Stage 1 & Stage 2



Republic of Slovenia
THE NATIONAL MEDICAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

Ms Tanja Križaj, MSc, OT
Zdravstvena fakulteta
Zdravstvena pot 5
SI-1000 Ljubljana

Our Ref.: KME 112/10/11
Date: November 2, 2011
Re: Ethics Approval for Project:
"Older people's engagement in meaningful occupations."

Dear Ms Križaj,

The National Medical Ethics Committee (NMEC) received from you, with a covering letter dated 19 September 2011, a request for ethical review of a research study entitled:

"Older people's engagement in meaningful occupations." Thesis for Ph. D. Degree, School of Health Professions, Faculty of Health, Education and Society, University of Plymouth, Peninsula Allied Health Centre, Derriford Road, Plymouth, PL6 8BH, UK. Supervisors: Dr. Anne Roberts, Director of Studies, and Prof. Catherine Hennessy.

The NMEC on its session of 18 October 2011 reviewed the documents provided and found the study ethically acceptable. I am enclosing the list of NMEC Members who voted on the protocol.

Sincerely,

Prof. Jože Trontelj, M.D., Chairman,
The National Medical Ethics Committee
of the Republic of Slovenia

16th December 2011

CONFIDENTIAL

Tanja Krizaj, BSc, MSc OT
University of Ljubljana
Faculty of Health Sciences
Occupational Therapy Department
Zdravstvena pot 5, 1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia

Dear Tanja

***Application Title: SLOVENIAN OLDER PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT IN
MEANINGFUL OCCUPATIONS***

Thank you for submitting this application to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Health). Before you can be given approval you should attend to the following points:

- The gatekeeper (Senior Association of Slovenia) cannot give the names and addresses of potential participants to the researchers without their consent (this would breach confidentiality). The applicant needs to find some alternative way of gaining access to participants. One possibility would be for the gatekeeper themselves to contact potential participants and seek their consent for giving the researcher their name and address. They will need to be told, in accompanying information, the nature, purpose and likely effects of involvement in the research.
- Confidentiality: electronic data should be kept in password protected computers.

When you submit your revised application, could you show how you have responded point by point, to the observations made above.

Yours sincerely

Professor Michael Sheppard, PhD, AcSS

Chair, Health Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Health, Education and Society

Faculty of Health, Education and Society
Plymouth University
Drake Circus
Plymouth PL4 8AA

T +44 (0)1752 586703
F +44 (0)1752 586970
E alison.bendall@plymouth.ac.uk
W www.plymouth.ac.uk

Professor Michael Sheppard
CQSW BSc MA PhD AcSS
Chair of Health Research Ethics
Committee

MS/ab

23rd December 2011

CONFIDENTIAL

Tanja Krizaj, BSc, MSc OT
University of Ljubljana
Faculty of Health Sciences
Occupational Therapy Department
Zdravstvena pot 5, 1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia

Dear Tanja

Application for Approval by Faculty Research Ethics Committee

***Application Title: SLOVENIAN OLDER PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT IN
MEANINGFUL OCCUPATIONS***

Following receipt of your revised ethics application, I am pleased to inform you that the Committee has granted approval to you to conduct this research.

Please note that this approval is for three years, after which you will be required to seek extension of existing approval.

Please note that should any MAJOR changes to your research design occur which effect the ethics of procedures involved you must inform the Committee. Please contact Alison Bendall on (01752) 586703 or by email alison.bendall@plymouth.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

Professor Michael Sheppard, PhD, AcSS
Chair, Health Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Health, Education and Society
Plymouth University

Faculty of Health, Education and Society
Plymouth University
Drake Circus
Plymouth PL4 8AA

T +44 (0)1752 586703
F +44 (0)1752 586970
E alison.bendall@plymouth.ac.uk
W www.plymouth.ac.uk

Professor Michael Sheppard
CQSW BSc MA PhD AcSS
Chair of Health Research Ethics
Committee

Appendix X continued: Ethics documents (Stage 3)



Republic of Slovenia

THE NATIONAL MEDICAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

Asist. Tanja Križaj, MSc OT
School of Health Professions, Faculty of Health and Human Sciences
University of Plymouth, Peninsula Allied Health Centre
Derriford Road, Plymouth
PL6 8BH, UK

Our Ref.: KME 90/11/13
Date: 31 December 2013
Re: Ethics Approval for an amendment of the project:
"Older people's engagement in meaningful occupations."

Dear Ms Križaj,

The National Medical Ethics Committee (NMEC) received from you with a covering letter dated 19 November 2011, a request for ethical review of an amendment to your study entitled:

"Slovenian older people's engagement in meaningful occupations (3rd stage)." Thesis for Ph. D. Degree, School of Health Professions, Faculty of Health, Education and Society, University of Plymouth, Peninsula Allied Health Centre, Derriford Road, Plymouth, PL6 8BH, UK. Supervisors: Dr. Anne Roberts, Director of Studies, and Prof. Catherine Hennessy. The original study was approved by the NMEC on 18 October 2013 (Ref. NMEC 112/10/11).

On its session of 19 December 2013 the NMEC reviewed the proposed amendment and found it ethically acceptable. Enclosed please find a list of the NMEC voting Members.

Sincerely,

Prof. Jože Trontelj, MD, PhD,
The National Medical Ethics Committee, *Chairman*

Božidar Voljč, MD, PhD,
The National Medical Ethics Committee, *Authorized Signataire*

31st January 2014

CONFIDENTIAL

Tanja Krizaj
School of Health Professions
Plymouth University
FF17, Peninsula Allied Health centre
Derriford Road
Plymouth
PL6 8BH

Dear Tanja

Amendment to Approved Application

Amendment Reference Number: 13/14- 218

***Application Title: SLOVENIAN OLDER PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT IN
MEANINGFUL OCCUPATIONS (Stage 3)***

I am pleased to inform you that the Committee has granted approval to you for your amendment to the application approved on 23rd December 2011.

Please note that this approval is for three years, after which you will be required to seek extension of existing approval.

Please note that should any MAJOR changes to your research design occur which effect the ethics of procedures involved you must inform the Committee. Please contact Sarah Jones (email sarah.c.jones@plymouth.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely

Professor Michael Sheppard, PhD, AcSS

Chair, Research Ethics Committee -
Faculty of Health & Human Sciences and
Peninsula Schools of Medicine & Dentistry

Appendix Y: Information letter (Stage 3)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX [Name of care home]
XXXXXX [Address]
XXXXXX

Name of the care home manager: XXXXX

Plymouth; XXXX

Information letter about research

My name is Tanja Križaj and I work as a Lecturer in Occupational Therapy at Plymouth University, Faculty of Health and Human Sciences, School of Health Professions, UK.

I'm also a PhD student, exploring older people's engagement in occupation, including their meaningful occupations. In Stage 2 of my PhD studies I explored how the transition into a care home influenced Slovenian older people's experiences of engagement in meaningful occupation. I was interested in individual experiences and perceptions since the purpose of my research is to understand the topic from the participants' perspective. I already cooperated with XXXX [name of care home] for the purpose of Stage 2, conducting 18 interviews with six older people at three time-points: before the relocation, one month after the relocation and six months after the relocation.

For the purpose of my final stage (Stage 3), I would like to conduct an ethnographic study (Creswell, 2013), where the purpose would be to explore everyday occupational engagement among the residents of your care home. The study was ethically approved by The Slovenian National Medical Ethics Committee, and Plymouth University Ethics Committee. As a data collection tool, I would use observations or participant observations. That means, that I would sometimes join the participants when engaging in different group activities. The duration of my observations would be two weeks (April 7-21, 2014), different parts of the day, including one night, weekends and holidays. My observations would take place in communal areas only, unless invited to the participants' room by the residents. The 6th floor, where the residents with dementia are located, will be excluded from observations. I will record my observations in the form of field notes, including descriptive and reflective notes. During observations, I will also engage in informal conversations with the care home residents and staff members, which I would also include in my field notes. To summarise, the aim is to explore the residents' every day occupational engagement, and what is the influence of a care home environment on their occupational engagement.

Occupational therapists are professionals, enabling people to be engaged in their meaningful occupations, contributing to their quality of life. Therefore, it is our responsibility to explore the area of occupational engagement. The findings of

my study may influence occupational therapy practice in care homes and eldercare in Slovenia. No research studies have been identified, focusing on older people in care homes from the occupational perspective. My long-term goal is to contribute to the development of models of care, enabling older people to maintain their identity and their meaningful occupations after they relocate into a care home.

All the information, gathered during observations will be made anonymous, as well as the identity of the care home and all the names of the residents and staff members. My field notes will be stored in a locked drawer and all the electronic data will be stored in a password protected computer. All the data will be destroyed after ten years. For the purpose of confidentiality, limited information about the care home will be provided and data will only be used for the purpose of this study. Anonymity of the residents, staff members and the care home will be maintained in all future publications.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw the care home from the study without giving the reason for it. In case you decide to take part in this study, I would ask you to sign a consent form. I would also ask, if I could distribute a short information letter on the notice boards of the care home, to inform the residents and the staff members about the research.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Tanja Križaj

.....
My contact details:

Tanja Križaj, dipl.del.ter., MSc OT
Doktorska študentka na Univerzi v Plymouth-u, Velika Britanija
Telefonska številka (mobi): +44 7557 346 945
E-mail: tanja.krizaj@plymouth.ac.uk, Skype name: tancykr

Supervisors' contact details:

Dr. Anne Roberts, Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer)
Plymouth University
School of Health Professions (Faculty of Health and Human Sciences)
United Kingdom
Telefonska številka: +44 (0) 1752 588874
E-mail: anne.roberts@plymouth.ac.uk

Prof. Catherine Hennessy, Chair in Public Health And Aging
Plymouth University
School of Nursing and Midwifery (Faculty of Health and Human Sciences)
United Kingdom
Telefonska številka: +441752586516
E-mail: catherine.hennessy@plymouth.ac.uk

INFORMED CONSENT

Title of the research: Slovenian older people's engagement in occupation and their transition into a care home

Name of the researcher: Tanja Križaj, BSc OT, MSc

Contact details:

Tel.: +44 7557 346 945

E-pošta: tanja.krizaj@plymouth.ac.uk

I confirm, that I have read and understand the information about research and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that the participation of [name of care home] is voluntary and that I can withdraw the care home from the study without consequences, and without giving the reason for it.

I understand that all the information that I give will be strictly confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this study.

I consent for [name of care home] to take part in this ethnographic study, with observations and participant observation being used as a data collection method.

Name of care home manager: XXXXXXXX

Date: XXXX

Signature: XXXXX

Name of the researcher: Tanja Križaj